



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
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**Harry Clay and Clay's Vaudeville Company,
1865 - 1930:
An Historical and Critical Survey**

Revised Edition

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

Clay Djubal

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my
great-great-great uncle, Harry Clay.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will address the problem of a particular construction of our Australian cultural past through its examination of the life and times of Harry Clay and his vaudeville enterprises. Through its extensive survey of primary source materials the thesis will fill in a number of historical black holes that have occurred in our knowledge of this period of popular Australian theatrical and cultural history. While one particular argument - that Harry Clay was one of the three most important figures in vaudeville management in Australia - is not entirely new, the thesis is nonetheless the first historical survey which has undertaken the task of proving this claim.

In line with this argument I will consider the influence that Clay's Vaudeville Company exerted through the many years it maintained regular employment for performers. Also of importance would be his role in establishing or developing the early careers of a great many performers who later went on to perform on the major vaudeville circuits, and even overseas. Such considerations could add significantly more knowledge to the sad fact that, as Victoria Chance acknowledges in The Companion to Theatre in Australia, only Dinks and Onkus are so well remembered purely from Clay's Theatres" (191). Hence the thesis will also endeavour to bring to light several performers whose once well-known careers in vaudeville (and other areas of the entertainment industry) were linked in some way to Harry Clay's organisation.

The thesis will also investigate aspects of Clay's institutional and commercial practices which were utilised as part of his day to day operations, identifying several options which actually worked against him in terms of later historical and cultural acknowledgment. As part of its historical focus, too, the earlier career of Harry Clay will be examined, as a means by which the thesis will be able to record and analyse the influences which informed Clay's business methods and style.

In addition to the main body of the thesis, I will present a detailed appendix section which will include information that while important to the historical examination of Harry Clay has not been able to be included as part of the dissertation's argument.

MA Revised and Re-formatted Edition: Notes

The following changes have been made to the 2011 Revised Edition thesis.

1. Re-formatted from double line spacing to 1.5 and decreased margin from wide to normal. This has led to a marked decrease in the number of pages.
2. Re-scanned most images
3. Added new images:
 - Patricks Plains map
 - St George's Hall 2007 (p. 55)
 - Harry Clay (p. 21)
 - Clay's princess Theatre (p. 83)
 - Replaced original Roy Rene photo (p. 124)
4. Changed Faning to Fanning (for both Charles Fanning and his sister Maud)
5. Replaced smart quotation marks to straight quotation marks and removed indents from the start of paragraphs.
6. Minor grammatical errors fixed.
 - Replaced "c" (for "circa") with ca.
 - Deleted errant full stops before citations
 - Underlined the names of revusicals instead of placing them inside quotations marks
 - Fixed errant quotation marks
 - Replaced QLD and with Queensland or Qld.
7. Added PDFs of selected articles (Appendix N)
 - "Sometimes His Shows Were Riot"
 - "Audiences Were Tough When Harry Clay Ran Vaudeville"
8. Made footnotes continuous (instead of re-starting the numbers in each new chapter)
9. Deleted "Magazine" from most Theatre references.
10. Fixed Nellie Kolle's Christian name (it was sometimes spelled Nelle)
11. Reformatted the position of some images.
12. Added a reference to Helen Furgus in footnote 78 (re: being the mother of Nellie Ferguson) and added her to the list of 'esteemed actors' in related paragraph
13. Additional information has been added to Appendix C (NSW/Queensland tours) - primarily dates, venues and towns.

WHEN THE BARITONE WAS WAITING ON THE HUNGRY HARRY CLAY

(By Charles Vaude)

There was bustling, there was hustling, as you've never seen before.
There was carrying and tarrying, from big boat to the shore.
There was helping hands and willing, on everything to lay,
When the Baritone he waited on the Hungry Harry Clay.

It was, "will you have a drink, sir? Would you like a cigarette?
Is there anything at all, sir, that I could go and get?
Does your "hook" at all want baiting? Now, you only have to say,"
Said the Baritone who waited on the Hungry Harry Clay.

It was, "mind the sea is rough, sir, it is much too cold to swim,
If I'm lucky with my line, sir, can I put you by a bream,
To make you feel at home, sir, I will try to do my best,
I'll sit upon your lap to keep the cold from out your chest.
If La La cracks a joke, sir, I will tell you what to say,"
Said the Baritone who waited on the Hungry Harry Clay.

"I'll tell you what to eat, sir, inform you what to drink,
And when it comes to Chasers, I will just give you the wink.
And if Kelso starts a throwing, I will tell you what I'll do
To save your Regal Presence, I will stand in front of you.
I've a watch here to inform you the right time of the day,"
Said the Baritone who waited on the Hungry Harry Clay

"And when they go for wood, sir, don't mind Charlie Vaude,
You're not quite fit for climbing, just stay right here, aboard.
And if they call you "loafer," which they are bound to do,
Just tell them I'm collecting enough wood for the two.
And I hope you won't be lonely, the short time I'm away,"
Said the Baritone who waited on the Hungry Harry Clay.

"Just sit yourself right here, sir, you haven't long to wait;
Here's a roll and butter, a knife, a fork, a plate.
How would you like your chop, sir, lean, with a little fat?
You never "came at" Chasers, well I'll put you wise to that.
Never throw at Wangy, or he'll "go crook" all the day,"
Said the Baritone who waited on the Hungry Harry Clay.

"Would you like a little fruit, sir, banana or a pear?
Now, mind where you are going, for they're throwing over there.
Keep telling funny stories, the boys are out for fun,
And you can bet your life, sir, I will laugh at everyone.
In *Variety* on Wednesday, I've told Brennan what to say,"
Said the Baritone who waited on the Hungry Harry Clay.

(Australian Variety 10 June 1914, 12)

(Written by Vaude to commemorate Harry Clay's initiation into the Chasers (a weekly social gathering of theatrical personalities on Sydney Harbour). The Baritone is Mel Brewer.

INTRODUCTION

Harry Clay, theatrical entrepreneur and one of Australia's premier tenor vocalists during the minstrel and vaudeville eras, was an enigma according to several historical features published some twenty-five years after his death. An apparent workaholic who neither drank nor smoked, and whose lectures to his employees and associates on the evils of these addictions were notorious (Theatre June 1915, 7), he was himself a committed gambler - especially where horses were concerned. His reputation for providing clean family entertainment over his numerous venues and circuits was second to none. While he would not tolerate a "blue" joke in any of his theatres, he had "a prodigious flow of invective" (West "Harry Clay" 149) that allegedly would have put a bullock driver to shame. In his early career as a minstrel tenor he found engagements with a number of prominent companies, but his strong personality, manifesting itself in hard-nosed and uncompromising standards, created tension with many of those employers, and rarely did he stay for any considerable length of time. It has been said of him that he did not take easily to direction ("Sometimes" n. pag.). Physically Clay was a robust man, used to handling all manner of unruly patrons, but it was also said of him that the outwardly tough exterior with which he related to his performers belied his generosity and quiet kindness.

Clay's position in Australian theatre history is also an enigma. He has been acknowledged as one of the three leading vaudeville entrepreneurs in the country (Andreacchio n. pag.), yet there has been surprisingly little information concerning him or his operations in the various historical accounts published over the past seventy-five years. And of that recorded, much is either inaccurate, or in no way reflects his achievement as one of the great figures in the history of Australian vaudeville. This thesis will demonstrate, however, that Harry Clay's career and reputation was highly regarded by his contemporaries throughout Australia as well as within the vaudeville industry, an industry which along with its generic twin minstrelsy, was the dominant form of popular entertainment in the country for over half a century.

An examination of numerous publications over the last decade or so which focus on Australian theatre history indicates quite clearly the extent to which Harry Clay's position in our historical accounts has been overlooked. Virtually the only account of his life to date has been John West's short entry in the Currency Press publication Companion to Theatre in Australia (149). In so far as other examples are concerned, the 1987 publication A Biographical Register: 1788-1939, provides little more than the following: "Clay, Harry.... Interested in vaudeville, revue, pantomime: dir.-mangr Clay's Bridge Theatre Co. which controlled Gaiety and Princess theatres Syd and Bridge Theatre Newtown: had formed co ca.1902 and been performer himself" (129). Katherine Brisbane's Entertaining Australia mentions Clay in passing only three times, one of these being in relation to George Wallace and Dinks Patterson (120, 148 and 179); while similarly the Australian Stage: A Documentary History, makes one brief mention of Clay (Love 193-4).

Harry Clay, however, is not alone in suffering from such oversights, or perhaps bias, against him, for as my research has made all too clear, there is an enormously rich history of Australian popular entertainment during the first three decades of this century, including both well-known and countless forgotten (though highly popular in their time) artists, managers and theatre workers, who like Clay have slipped through the cracks of our national memory. Perhaps this says a good deal about both the Australian psyche towards our own cultural heritage - that we seem to find it more culturally satisfying to study foreign theatre traditions before we acquaint ourselves with our own - as well as the general disdain towards non-dramatic traditions inherent in past scholarly and historical thinking. Interestingly, too, it is the non-Australian managers and artists, in addition to the American minstrel companies which toured this country during the second half of the last century, who dominate the comparatively small number of academic or historical perspectives in the area of popular theatre during the vaudeville and minstrel eras. Such people include Harry Rickards, the Fullers and Charles B. Hicks. Only the most well-known of local acts, and principally those who lasted into the 1940s and beyond, including those who successfully made the transition into radio, film and television - the most notable being Roy Rene, George Wallace and George Sorlie - have been given any semblance of coverage so far.

While these claims suggest a past bias by Australian theatre historians against popular traditions such as vaudeville, it will also be the argument of this thesis that other factors have contributed towards the lack of research into a period of relatively recent theatrical history. For example, I would argue that to a large extent it has been both Clay's own business practices, as well as vaudeville's very popularity which has 'contributed to this void. To this end vaudeville's "everydayness" and the conception by many of its being plebeian and ephemeral has contributed to its being overlooked. In addition, both its distance from contemporary understanding and the lack of primary records available, have led to this situation. With regard to Harry Clay, then, it will be one of the arguments of this thesis that it was his very popularity, in addition to his organisation's strong relationship with the communities it serviced, that saw him accepted as an everyday part of life. No one thought to collect memorabilia, or make historical records of his career. For as with any other person going about their business in these communities, Harry Clay's visits to each of the suburbs on his circuits was simply part of a weekly routine. Even the trade journals of the day took it for granted that his contribution and position within the industry would simply be a matter of historical record and an accepted fact. As the Theatre notes in its May 1922 issue:

Australian talent owes a lot to Mr Clay. Any act with the least promise in it can always get a show with him. In this way he is responsible for bringing out some of the finest performers Australia has produced. But it is first and foremost as a stand-by to Australians - employing them by the hundreds year in and year out - that he will ever be most gratefully remembered (24).

Of further surprise, however, is the fact that even his eighteen annual tours of Northern NSW and Queensland (these being on average some six months in duration) have consistently failed to surface in accounts of his career. This is completely disproportionate to the exploits of his contemporary George Sorlie, whose travelling tent shows began touring the country only a few years or so after Clay's death, and which have become part of Australian theatrical folklore. During his career, too, Clay ran one of the country's leading vaudeville booking agencies. His name was also synonymous with the theatrical institution known as "Poverty Point," a place where unemployed artists and hopefuls congregated in their attempts to seek an interview with Sydney's "King of Vaudeville." Again, this has all but been forgotten or overlooked.

This thesis will, through its historical survey of Harry Clay's life and career, propose several arguments which will be supported by evidence in the form of historical records, published accounts, reviews and anecdotes, as well as several interviews. It will provide empirical support to the argument that Harry Clay, along with Harry Rickards and the Fuller brothers, was indeed one of the three most influential vaudeville entrepreneurs in Australia. While such a claim has generally been accepted by theatre historians, this thesis will present the first comprehensive examination to back up the largely anecdotal evidence available to date.

The second argument will be that both Clay and his organisation were responsible for supporting and nurturing the careers of Australian performers to an extent unmatched by any other management, even that of the Tivoli and Fuller circuits. In this regard, his influence stretched beyond vaudeville and into the areas of radio and film, dominated by artists such as Mo, George Wallace, Arthur Tauchert and countless others who learned their craft under his tutoring and/or the auspices of his company. And third, that Clay's surprising omission from historical and social accounts of his era is both the result of his business practices - primarily his ephemeral methods of advertising and promotion - as well as the comparatively low profile he maintained socially, despite his fame and the public's recognition of him. Further to this, it will be seen that in addition to the period he operated in being perhaps just out of reach of current research activities and contemporary memory, it has also been the genre of vaudeville itself which has been under researched, and that Clay's part in it, influential though it was, is simply a continuation of that oversight.

Chapter One will look primarily at Harry Clay from the perspective of the private man - his relationship with his family, his personality and his non-business interests. Its purpose is to give a general idea of the kind of person Harry Clay was, or to be more precise, how he was represented by his contemporaries, and by those in later years.

Chapter Two examines his early career as a minstrel singer, leading up to the formation of his own vaudeville company in 1901. This period, although still containing several gaps with regard to his whereabouts and the extent of his engagements, provides both a perspective on the beginnings of his career,

as well as that of several other city based and touring minstrel organisations. In this sense, a number of those people he was himself influenced by also will be presented for a cursory examination.

The third chapter investigates the early years of Harry Clay's vaudeville operations - focusing primarily on his Sydney suburban shows, while Chapter Four will examine the company's operations from 1913, the year he built the Bridge Theatre (Newtown), through to its eventual demise in the late 1920s. It is a period which saw the company undergo a great deal of expansion, including both the Sydney suburbs and a south-western NSW circuit. The underlying purpose of these chapters will be to analyse Clay's entrepreneurial and logistical organisation, as well as his relationship with his audiences and his employees - with a view to understanding why, despite the enormous popularity and success the company enjoyed during its almost thirty years of operations, so very little is known about it today.

The final chapter will focus on Clay's Northern NSW and Queensland vaudeville tours which ran for eighteen unbroken years starting in 1901, with an additional tour being undertaken in 1927. Further to this were several pantomime and dramatic tours, including the 1909 Walter Bentley Hamlet tour (with the repertoire also consisting of a selection of melodramas). A tour of North Queensland by Roy Rene (which has been attributed to having been financed and produced by Clay's) just months before the eventual demise of the company's operations will also be discussed.

The appendix section which accompanies this thesis has been provided primarily to assist further research into this area and consists of (aside from additional information concerning Clay and his family) details relating to his company's personnel and operations, associated organisations, and the Queensland touring parties, all of which was uncovered during the course of the project. In this regard, it was the lack of secondary source material available from the start of my research which created the need to collect anything and everything associated with Harry Clay before being able to determine what was or was not needed. I have referred to the appendix section throughout the thesis whenever certain information is required.

The theatres and halls referred to throughout this thesis were invariably located in NSW and Queensland. Any interstate and regional venues mentioned are accompanied by the town or city they were situated in. All theatres or halls which have no such reference were therefore Sydney city or metropolitan based.

Due to the historical nature of this thesis, and the need to provide dates for a large number of performance engagements, all bibliographic citations for the dates can be referenced, unless otherwise stated, in the newspaper for that town or city on those particular dates given. This is simply the result of almost all of this kind of information having been found in newspaper advertising. In Sydney, for example, such dates will have been published in the Sydney Morning Herald; in Toowoomba the Toowoomba Chronicle; and in Rockhampton the Morning Bulletin etc. A list of newspapers consulted for this thesis is presented as part of the bibliography. With advertising seldom failing to appear on the given day of a performance (the

exception being almost always Sunday engagements) during the period covered by this thesis, on the rare occasions this does not occur a full citation will be included within the body of the work. All other non-performance related references (i.e. quotes, anecdotes and details, for example) will be fully cited according to MLA style.

During the period covered by this thesis the terms producer and director meant the opposite to that which we now understand them to be. So as not to confuse readers I use the modern meanings (i.e. director indicates one who manages and directs the stage performance) throughout the written parts of the thesis. The terms, when included as part of an historical source (e.g. as part of an image or quotation) will, however, naturally indicate the older/reverse use of these terms.

CHAPTER ONE

"HARRY CLAY: A PORTRAIT"

Harry Clay, King of Vaudeville stood on the footpath in Castlereagh St., opposite the old Tivoli Theatre. Outside the theatre he saw his top comedian, Ted Tutty. Clay rammed a couple of fingers into his mouth and whistled. Tutty went down on all fours and as the traffic clattered to a halt crawled slowly across the road. He came up to his employer and licked his hand. Clay patted him on the head. "You're a good pooch, Teddy," he said. "Be on time tonight, or I'll down you." Then he went his way. Even the policeman on duty at the corner of King and Castlereagh Streets showed no surprise at these antics. Everyone in Sydney knew Harry Clay.

("Audiences" n. pag)

This chapter will attempt to examine perhaps the most difficult aspect involved in the historical reconstruction of Harry Clay - that of his personality. To a large degree, too, this includes his family and non-professional activities. From the start it must be acknowledged that almost everything of this nature that has been uncovered during the course of the dissertation's research is essentially that of biographical construction - a matter of interpretation which Barbara Garlick, in her work on the tent showman E. I. Cole, sees as an "obvious site of possible misrepresentation." In a sense it requires the historian to "negotiate the hagiography of publicity and the pitfalls of reconstruction from frequently disparate and ephemeral sources" (15-16). As Garlick further notes:

The problem of biography... is probably the most dangerous of minefields for the theatre historian.... All wrote their lives for public consumption, that is, for publicity and thus economic purposes (13, 16).

I too must acknowledge the ephemeral nature of this dissertation's bibliographic refiguration. The sources consulted include the major trade journals of the period, Australian metropolitan and regional newspapers, directories, legal documents, published and unpublished memoirs, and archival material such as Deceased Estate Files. This thesis also includes information from several interviews conducted either by myself or through the Oral History Collection of the Stanton Library, North Sydney. With the inclusion of numerous published anecdotes these provide a particularly useful conduit of information between the historical moment and the contemporary interpretation. Once again, however, they each become, in essence, manufactured texts, influenced as much by degrees of exaggeration as they are by selectivity and unreliable memory.

With this in mind, the perspective one gets from the many published insights into Clay is largely influenced by his "geniality" (perhaps the most often used expression) and his physical presence. Numerous anecdotes concerning Harry Clay's generosity abound within the pages of the trade journals of the period, as do expressions of gratitude from many employees, both past and present. These should be considered somewhat

circumspectly, however, as both the origins and the objectives of the producers of these platitudes are all too often unidentifiable. They do on the other hand indicate very strongly the perception and construction of Clay generated by the press, and accepted within the social fabric of not just those living in Sydney and NSW, but to the extent of these publications' distribution networks. For example, a 1911 issue of the Theatre published an account of Clay's generous hand-out to an old cripple, "who on the tender¹ putting out from the Queensland town of Mackay was seeking money to enable him to get to his wife and children." Noting the lack of charity by Fasola (Fasola's Vaudeville Company) "who had done exceptional business in Mackay, largely as a result of his manager having secured the hall which Mr Clay for years had been in the habit of playing in," the magazine records that "Mr Clay immediately hunted up the ancient derelict, and promptly gave him five times the amount he wanted. A white man² always is the generous, big-hearted Harry" (May 1912, 29).³

Harry Clay's good-nature and attitude is generally seen as very much a central aspect to his success as a theatrical entrepreneur. As the following chapters will indicate, he not only employed quality and popular artists for his operations, but also sought to give those with ability, although perhaps lacking in experience, a chance. And in this matter he is seen to have committed himself to the improvement of those willing to listen and learn from his knowledge and experience. On the other hand, he was with little doubt a tough manager - one who would brook no dissent or any unprofessional attitude, and whose gruff manner would seldom fail to put performers in their place. Despite this, he was by all reports extremely well-liked by his artists and throughout the vaudeville community. Charles Norman distinctly remembers his first meeting with Clay, sometime in 1923. Norman, having recently moved up from Melbourne with his partner Chic Arnold, recalls that:

He was quite a gentleman.... He came outside the office and he stood there with Chic and I, and he talked to us about the business and what we could do, and how he expected a lot because he said we've had some very good people from Melbourne. So he said you've got a very good chance here.... and he gave us good advice. He appealed to us when we first met him as a kind person (Appendix H, 162).

Roy Rene's recollection of Clay [*included in Chapter 3*] is also a favourable one. An Australian Variety and Show World glimpse published in 1916 also provides us with a sample impression of the kind of reputation Clay held during his business career:

Harry Clay was recently presented with a framed photograph of the picnic group. Conductor Percy Davis, on behalf of the committee, handed the gift over to the silvery-haired one, who responded in a cordial and appreciative speech. The good feeling existing between the genial Clay and his employees is most marked (12 Apr. 1916, 5).

¹ Arrival by sea at Mackay for many years required passengers and cargo to be transported from the steamer to the shore by small boats (or tenders as they were known).

² The term "white man" is used frequently during the period of time covered by this thesis as an expression for a man of honourable character, such as was conventionally associated with one of European extraction.

³ The full anecdote is included as part of Appendix J. This thesis will also present further examples of Clay's "geniality" as recorded throughout his lifetime, within the following chapters and as part of the Appendix (see I, J and K).

The media construction of Harry Clay also often includes observations regarding his physical appearance and manner - his robust physique, ability with his fists, and his youthful looks (despite the advancing years) being mentioned either in passing, or as the focus of personal insights. For example, Australian Variety claimed in 1914 that, "he is (apart from his grey hair) as young looking as when [this] writer first heard him... about twenty-three years ago. A smart dresser, and of fine personality, Mr Clay is still a powerful factor as a vaudeville artist" (13 May 1914, n. pag.). Some six years later, and then fifty-five years of age, Clay's youthful looks were again referred to in the same magazine:

Although connected with the theatrical business for about thirty-five years - if not more - there are those who will tell you that apart from his silvery hair, "Harry Clay is as young looking as when we first knew him, over thirty years ago; yes, sir!" There is nothing like feeling just as young as you can, but when a man looks a decade more youthful than he is then good luck to him. Mr Clay doesn't appear ten years younger than he actually is - he looks twenty! (29 Apr. 1920, n. pag.).

Clay was also remembered as a manager who was required to use his fists over the years in order to bring undesirable behaviour in his audiences under control. The Argus records that he "was a pretty good chucker-out... often [giving] a demonstration of this from the stage of the Bridge Theatre" ("Sometimes" n. pag.). By all accounts, this was not an era when shy and retiring accountant type entrepreneurs took to vaudeville management - especially not in the working-class suburbs or mining towns. Even as late as 1918, when aged in his early fifties, the Theatre records him attending to a "hulking six-footer" who was "promptly dispatched into unconsciousness" (Nov. 1918, 24) [see also *Appendix J*, 178]; while two years later, when announcing that he was available for an "old Buffers' boxing contest," Australian Variety suggested that "whoever beats Harry will know there has been a cyclone around somewhere. He can hit like a mule kicking" (1 Apr. 1920, 3).

To a large degree Harry Clay's personality and management style were shaped by his experiences as a minstrel singer during the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century, a career that included a great deal of country touring. His physical abilities were also honed through years of labouring, first as an apprentice tradesman, and later in response to the requirements of a travelling showman, both as an entertainer and a manager. Like many artists, Clay both celebrated "the good old days" and reminded readers of how tough it had been then:

And to think of the hardships such men suffered! Others with not a fraction of their gifts are today getting more for a week than they earned in three months. Except for a few comedians the performers of the present time - in minstrel-work and vaudeville, I mean - are not to be compared with the men of twenty years ago. Comparatively speaking the lot of the artist to-day is truly a bed of roses (Theatre Sept. 1914, 25).

Although much of the biographical information presented in this thesis is seemingly open to self-aggrandisement or refiguration, there are several historical records which provide us with less subjective glimpses at Harry Clay's early life, if still presenting for the historian areas of ambiguity with respect to the details of his personality and experiences.

Harry Clay was born Henry Clay⁴ on the 10th of May 1865 in the Patrick Plains, of New South Wales, an area which encompasses the town of Singleton. His father, John Clay, described as a dealer on his son's birth certificate, was 57 years of age; his mother just 32. Very little is known of John Clay at this stage, other than the details provided on birth, deaths and marriage registrations, but from these it can be established that he was born in London in 1808, and that he and Mary Anne Lord, of Windsor, N.S.W., married in Sydney on the 27th of October 1851. It was in Sydney, too, that they had the first of their four surviving children, a daughter named Mary who was born in 1853. The Clays continued to live in Sydney for at least the next decade, with their daughter being followed in 1855 by Ralph J. and then another son, George, three years later. By at least 1862, however, the family is known to have moved to the Patrick Plains district. In that year Mary gave birth to a second daughter, Sarah, in the nearby centre of Murrurundi, and then in 1865 their youngest surviving child, Henry, was born.



Plate 1

Harry Clay: From the front cover of Australian Variety 23 May 1917.
(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)

With little information now available with respect to the local community of Patrick Plains, the Clay family's short association with the district remains relatively unknown. It is presumed that John Clay's decision to move to the area would have taken into consideration the business opportunities on offer in the rapidly developing and expanding district. Another possibility is the fact that a Clay family member,

⁴ Clay's birth certificate shows only the name Henry Clay, although several records within his Deceased Estate File include the name Walter as a middle name.

William Clay, had already established himself in the area some years previously, thus presenting John Clay with an additional incentive to settle his family there. These years in the district were marred by tragedy, however, with the death in 1867 of five year old Sarah at Muswellbrook, while two years later another girl, Elizabeth, died from complications at birth. During the next three years or so they continued to live in the area, but by around 1872 or 1873 most of the family had moved to Newcastle.⁵



Plate 2
Patrick Plains, Hunter Valley region

As with their time at Patrick Plains, little is known about the Clays' residence in Newcastle other than rare glimpses furnished by Harry Clay in later years. A 1914 overview of his career published in the Theatre supplies information gleaned from him with regard to a delivery service he ran from the age of eight: "He had two delivery vans - not boxes drawn by billygoats," notes the magazine, "but proper carts and horses. Mr Clay himself worked one [and] he employed a man to drive the other" ("Performer" 25). While the plausibility of this anecdote naturally requires some caution, the acumen and workaholic attitude which informed Clay's business style throughout much of his career may well have been formed by this kind of experience during his early years in Newcastle. It is possible, too, that his father's influence with regard to hard work and enterprise could have provided Clay with added incentive to succeed in entrepreneurial activities.

By the age of 18 Clay was apprenticed into the plastering trade in Newcastle, a position he held down for some eighteen months. In the same article published in the Theatre, he recalls appearing in amateur stage-work around the same time, performing as a tenor singer and playing in farces ("Performer" 25). It is likely

⁵ It is believed that the oldest daughter, Mary, having married a local man, Thomas Parsons, in 1871 stayed in the district.

then that these would have been minstrel shows. Even at age eighteen Clay's most valuable asset, his voice, was noticeable, it having been developed as a youngster through his singing in local Church of England groups. One of the amateur societies he was prominently identified with during this period was The Great Northern Variety Company. By around 1884, he had given up plastering and taken to the stage professionally. His debut was with a little touring show organised to play a circuit in the Northern Rivers area of N.S.W.⁶ The tour was apparently a reasonably successful one as it reportedly "paid its way," a difficult enough assignment for inexperienced touring showmen ("Performer" 25). Some short time later the young Henry Clay, as he was more commonly known during this period, moved to Sydney where he set about establishing himself as a professional minstrel tenor. [*Chapter Two takes up Clay's career from this point*]

Much of Harry Clay's personal life is of course unknown, with most of the information available coming from the various trade journals published over the course of his career. Unfortunately many of the insights published within these sources have concentrated on aspects of his business operations. Although not known to have come from a theatrical background, or endowed with any particularly gifted abilities other than a good voice, a strong personality, and high expectations, he was able to make his name quite quickly in Sydney's popular world of variety entertainment. This would lead eventually to his associations with both the higher echelons of the show business world, and in terms of his entrepreneurial career, with a number of experienced business men, including A.R. Abbott and solicitor Harold T. Morgan (an alderman and several times Mayor of Newtown). Both men would become Clay's eventual business partners in the Bridge Theatre Company.

Only sketchy details are known, too, of Harry Clay's family life. Virtually nothing concerning his wife has been located in the various publications searched during the research phase of this thesis, with only a little more having being found in relation to his daughter, Essie. And the information about Kate and Essie contained in these is for the most part related to performance matters, much of this being published during several Queensland tours prior to, and during, Clay's early entrepreneurial activities. It has been established, however, that Clay married fellow minstrel singer and actress Catherine Jubb in 1887. The wedding took place in Glebe, with Harry just 22 and Kate, as she was called, 18. Almost all the other knowledge concerning Kate Clay has come from either Registrar General records or from Harry and Essie Clay's Deceased Estate Files.

Of the information concerning Kate Clay that has been located we know that she was born in Glebe on the twenty-eighth of June 1869, the eldest child of Thomas and Mary Ann Jubb. As a contralto and serio-comic, her career seems to have been very much tied in with her husband's, there being no record found as yet to

⁶ The name or details of the company have not yet been established. However, two other artists associated with the tour were Harry Kelly and Jack Huntsdale.

her performing with any other managements other than those in which Harry was engaged. In addition, she took the stage name Kate Henry, using Harry's Christian name as her stage surname. 1905, the year she is known to have last toured Queensland as a performer with her husband's company, is also the last time any reference or record concerning her has been located, apart from several legal documents.

In 1888, the year following their marriage, Kate gave birth to their only child, Essie, in Glebe. Harry Clay was undoubtedly devoted to his daughter, and gave her every opportunity he could in the entertainment business. A child performer almost from infancy, she toured many times with both Harry and Catherine leading up the establishment of Clay's vaudeville company, and is also known to have been given a short engagement with Harry Rickards in 1898 at age ten (Sydney Morning Herald 2 Apr. 1898, 2). In later years she became a well-known attraction in her father's tours, and eventually took on two leading roles in his 1908 and 1909 Dramatic Company tours of Queensland, further testament to Harry Clay's desire to provide opportunities for her. And indeed, it seems that both her career and reputation as a serious actress were on the rise - perhaps in part the result of having undergone tuition from Harry Leston and Roland Watts-Phillips (two leading Australian based actor/teachers of the period) around 1908/09. She is also known to have appeared in several notable dramatic productions in the following years, along with vaudeville engagements with her father's company.

It is believed that Essie Clay's career was unfortunately brought to an end after she contracted a serious bout of Spanish Influenza in 1919. Reports indicate that it took several years for her to physically recover from this, although there is also reason to suspect that it may have had an even longer lasting psychological effect. Never marrying, she is known to have resided for many years at Bondi, later returning to Glebe Point, where she died in 1948. Her Deceased Estate File, which also contains her Last Will and Testament, suggests rather strongly that she died having incurred a good deal of bitterness and/or sadness in her life. [*For further details on Kate and Essie Clay see Appendix L and M respectively*].

With regard to Harry Clay's relationship with his wife, there is some question as to whether they remained together as husband and wife, (although it is known that they never divorced) due in part to both the information found regarding the couple's ownership of property in Glebe and Watson's Bay, and the complete lack of reference to his wife by Clay throughout his career. Concerning this last matter, there has been no mention of Catherine Clay found whatsoever in any periodicals, or as having had anything to do with Clay's company after 1905, even to being involved with the company's annual picnics.⁷ Although there

⁷ These picnics were designed to bring the various members of the company and their spouses or friends together in a social gathering. While many of those attending the picnics are mentioned in industry magazines, no indication of Kate Clay's or for that matter Essie Clay's, presence has been located. The social aspects of Clay's organisation were apparently highly valued. Valmai Goodlet recalls in an interview conducted as part of this research project, that her father, Maurice Chenoweth (a Clay's manager/producer), had many gatherings at the family's home in Stanmore, whereupon the company's artists would regularly socialise (and effectively entertain the local neighborhood as well). Goodlet vividly remembers Amy Rochelle (later the Fuller's leading principle boy) attending many of these "parties" - saying of the Australian soprano, that "she was simply wonderful."

is the likelihood that at some stage they separated, it is also known that Clay died at his wife's residence at Watson's Bay, and that Catherine Clay is buried with her husband at Sydney's South Head Cemetery. This suggests that any such separation, if it occurred, was not particularly acrimonious or indeed final. Furthermore, the headstone on Clay's grave records, too: "In Memory of my loving Husband." It is further known that Catherine Clay retained Harold T. Morgan as her legal representative, he having been her husband's business partner and solicitor. Morgan continued to manage her financial affairs (in addition to having loaned her a significant amount of money) up until at least 1948, which presents still more evidence in support of an argument that some kind of relationship existed between husband and wife prior to Harry Clay's death.

In the matter of property ownership, too, the house at 218 Glebe Point Road provides us with further insight into the relationship between Harry Clay's personal life and his business strategies. Believed to have been the first of several valuable pieces of real estate bought by Clay, this property was situated in what was (and still is) considered the fashionable area of Glebe. It was, however, purchased solely in the name of Catherine Clay. The reasons for this are unknown, although it has been speculated that perhaps the uncertain nature of Harry Clay's business, along with the fluctuating fortunes he may have encountered as a seasoned gambler, may well have seen him place the property (and others) in his wife's name to protect themselves against any unfortunate circumstances. There may well have been some legal and/or taxation reasons for this, too. In this matter it may be assumed that Clay was being guided from the earliest days by his friend and solicitor, Harold Morgan, as the latter's name is included in the legal papers assigned to the property sale.⁸

Purchased on the 2nd of September 1908, only days after the return of Clay's eighth Waxworks and Company tour of Queensland, the house and land cost an enormous £1,500. Of further surprise, however, is the fact that it was paid for with cash - there being no mortgage attached to the sale. This in itself suggests that Clay's business was by this stage returning him quite considerable amounts of money. The only evidence relating to Harry Clay's financial situation previous to that date is the large deposit he made in setting up a Trust Account for Essie in 1905. Records of this transaction can be found in his Deceased Estate File (NSW Government Archives, Location No 20/1021, File No 11278), and show that he opened the account at the Post Office Savings Bank in Martin Place with 300 pounds cash on the 22nd of August - only days after the completion of his fifth Queensland tour.

⁸ The previous owners of 218 Glebe Point Road were the sons of the late George Wigram Allen, the original land owner of most of the Toxteth Park Estate, later Glebe. The house itself was built by a Presbyterian lay preacher named Walker, who ran the largest building company in the area. It has been suggested that the house was being run as a boarding house after 1914, to create additional income for the Clay's. The fact that the house was known to have been used for such purposes at some stage has been confirmed by the current owner, Christine Newton, although specific years have not yet been established. I wish to further express my gratitude to both Ms Newton for her generosity in allowing me access to the original deeds, and Glebe historian Max Solling for his invaluable assistance.



Plate 3
218 Glebe Point Road
(Clay Djubal)

Of interest, then, is the stark contrast this residence shows in relation to 25 Wigram Road - the single story terrace dwelling the Clays lived in only the year before. Less than fifty metres around the corner, the new premises (an impressive two-story residence with stables, staff quarters, detached kitchen, and magnificent cedar staircase and paneling) clearly indicates the distance Harry Clay had moved socially and financially. As Glebe historian Max Solling points out in an interview conducted as part of this dissertation's research, Wigram Road could still be classified as an upper class area, in comparison to the north eastern portion of Glebe, but is in no way comparable to the Glebe Point Road district north of Hereford Street and extending to the water, which includes No 218. This suggests that the period in which the Clay's resided at No 25 Wigram Road (1907 to 1908) is reflective of their economic stability in response to Harry Clay's increasingly successful business up to that time. Glebe Point Road, however, was considerably more fashionable and exclusive, indicating a significant shift in the family's financial position within a relatively short span of time.⁹

Fueling further speculation with regard to Clay's personal life around this time, Sand's Sydney Directory records that after having lived at 218 Glebe Point Road between 1909 and 1914, Harry Clay, either on his own or with Catherine, moved back to the same block of terrace houses in Wigram Road that he had previously lived in. This despite the fact that the Glebe Point Road property is known to have stayed in Catherine Clay's name until 1943. Between around 1914/15 and 1917 then, his residential address was at No. 29 Wigram Road, changing to No. 23 in 1918. In 1920 there is a reference in Sand's which records that Clay was living in Marine Parade, Vaucluse, further supported by a reference in Australian Variety which

⁹ For further information regarding Harry Clay's ownership of other properties, and the unusual circumstances concerning several of these, see Appendix K.

notes that "Clay's Watson's Bay tenants presented him with an address [speech] the other day, which was much appreciated" (18 June 1920, 7). It would appear likely, however, that that as Clay is known to have passed away at "Vaucluse Flats," Watson's Bay, and that there is no evidence of his ownership of the property in the Deceased Estate File (to the contrary, several references in the file point to the residence being "his wife's place"), that once again Catherine Clay has held the title to the property.



Plate 4

Terrace houses in Wigram Road, Glebe (including Nos 23, 25 and 29,
where Harry Clay is known to have resided)
(Clay Djubal)

While the situation regarding his marriage, residential addresses and ownership of properties is somewhat unclear, another aspect of Harry Clay's personal life is far more obvious - that of his involvement in horse racing (and in particular, gambling). Clay was renowned for his love of betting - with many references and anecdotes concerning his favourite non-vaudeville pastime being found in the periodicals of the day. [*several of these are included in Appendix J*] In 1921 Everyone's reported that Clay, "whose great hobby is racehorses, has recently changed his team from Kogarah to Kensington," and that he had "bought a couple of fine yearlings at Tuesday's sale ... [putting] them under the watchful eye of Trainer Arthur, the old-time ventriloquist, who now turns out a good many winners" (30 Mar. 1921, 20). This would seem to indicate that Clay had been involved in the horse-racing industry for some period of time. Furthermore, his long-time friendship with Dick Heaney, a Randwick racecourse identity [*see Appendix E*], suggests that Clay's knowledge of the sport could have been extensive, if not well informed.

While anecdotes concerning his wins and losses at the track have often been recorded throughout his later lifetime, reports of Clay's association with others in the theatrical community are rather more scarce. With his hands-on commitment to the company no doubt taking up much of his time, and with horse-racing taking up most of whatever leisure-time he had to spare, Clay's active involvement within the Sydney community

(whether social or institutional) was, not surprisingly, somewhat minimal. As Chapter Two of this thesis will shortly indicate, however, Harry Clay's infrequent appearance at public social activities (including such events as the popular benefit nights) is also evident throughout his earlier career. An example of his low-key attitude to social interests concerns his brief involvement with a vaudeville social club known as "The Chasers," a group who met regularly once a week to cruise out on Sydney Harbour as a kind of "boys only club" with fishing, drinking, and throwing (wrestling) high on the agenda.

Consisting mostly of an "in-group" of artists closely associated with Australian Variety (who published their weekly exploits over a number of years in a column titled "With the Chasers"), the main ring-leaders were Jack "Porky" Kearns, Martin Brennan (Australian Variety editor and publisher), and others such as Charlie Vaude, Bill Kelso and chief cook and organiser Joe Wangenheim. The Chasers often invited local and overseas celebrities into their fold, including Harry Rickards and the Fullers, with many like Billie C. Brown and Billy Watson becoming regulars themselves. Harry Clay is known to have joined the group only on four occasions - these being during the winter months of 1914. His first occasion was such a meritorious achievement for The Chasers that Charlie Vaude immortalised the event with a poem, included in this thesis as the Preface, and titled "When the Baritone was Waiting on the Hungry Harry Clay." That Clay did not continue his association with this vaudevillian-dominated club, in addition to his acknowledged workaholic status, suggests that social activities outside his work and racing interests were not a priority.

Off stage, Clay's complex nature was abundantly clear to those who knew and worked with him. As the introduction pointed out, he was extremely particular about the quality of his entertainments, refusing to allow coarse jokes or language to occur on the stage or, if at all possible, from within the audience. However, as the "Audiences are Tough" article records, "fans came miles sometimes just to hear Harry Clay swear" (n. pag.). An amusing incident recalled in the "Sometimes His Shows Were a Riot" article shows this side of Clay's nature when he attended a rehearsal to which only two company members had turned up. The flow of invective, which apparently lasted some two or more minutes, was overheard by the female artist present behind the stage. After apologising to her, Clay is recorded as saying "but if you had to work with a mob of Australian @#%!", then followed another stream of adjectives – "you'd swear too" (n. pag).¹⁰

Harry Clay's lectures on the perils of drink and tobacco were also an apparently legendary aspect of his personality. "When tapped for a loan," notes the Theatre, "it was ... Clay's custom, before responding, to lecture the applicant as to the evils of smoking and drinking. 'Why, [Clay would ask] don't you give it up? It's no use telling me you can't. Look at me! I neither smoke nor drink. When I say a thing I do it. I've got no time for the man who hasn't got the backbone to stick to what he says'" (June 1915, 7). On the other hand, the subject of addiction to gambling was a matter he was known to be somewhat chary about - the same magazine's writer indicating that it was, in his case, "a very tender spot."

¹⁰ The entire anecdote is included in Appendix J, 277).

The geniality and popularity accorded Harry Clay, along with the various personality traits and anecdotes published both during and after his lifetime is as previously mentioned open to being read as having been partly manufactured for publicity purposes. The significant turnout at his funeral in February 1925, however, is in some way a testament to the regard in which he was held by those who knew him (Everyone's 25 Feb. 1925, 4). That his contribution to Australian popular theatre has been so surprisingly overlooked and underestimated by historians during the past seventy or more years perhaps reflects in part the cultural values of Australian society as much as it does our ability to record and reflect on local achievements. To this end the following chapters will investigate Clay's influence on the Australian entertainment industry and the Australian people during his forty year career - an achievement dominated by his stand for the local artist and the local industry. And it was achievement which the Theatre recognised when it recorded:

Mr Clay is really the patron saint of the Australian performer. And how many hungry homes would there be, if it were not for the commercial-showman genius of Harry. For the simple, truthful fact is - the generous Sir Benjamin Fuller himself would be the first to admit it - that nobody in Australia has surpassed Mr Clay in the employment of Australian-born artists (July 1923, 17).

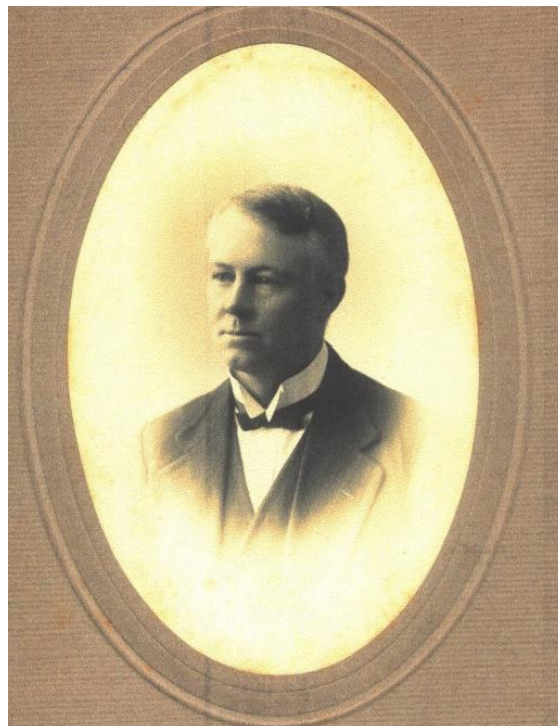


Plate 5
Harry Clay
(The Author)

CHAPTER TWO

"THE SILVERY TENOR: 1885 – 1900"

Harry Clay came from Rickards - he was one of his stars. He sang. He had a very sweet tenor voice, a very good voice indeed. And he used to be starred by Harry Rickards.

(Charles Norman, Appendix H, 207)

It is apparent that Harry Clay's professional Sydney debut with a major company occurred on the fourth of October 1885, through an engagement for Sydney based entrepreneur, Frank Smith. Billed as H. Clay he performed third last on a program consisting of sixteen acts at the Sir Joseph Banks Pavilion and Pleasure Grounds at Botany (Sydney Morning Herald 3 Oct. 1885, 2). The use of his given name, however, would become a fixture in program advertising and newspaper reviews for at least the next four or five years, and on occasion after that. That he was known as Henry during this time is also indicated by the name being used in his inclusions in Sand's Sydney Directory right up until 1897. The song he performed during this first performance was "Thou Art So Near and Yet So Far." It was a sentimental ballad of the kind later to become his signature style - and through which he was able to establish his position as one of Sydney's premier local minstrel and vaudeville tenors for decades to come. Of his early popularity with audiences Clay himself "modestly confessed" to the Theatre in 1914, "I was a hell of a favourite in those days" ("Performers" 25).

The Sir Joseph Banks Pleasure Grounds, located close to Lord's Estate in the township of Botany (Sydney Morning Herald 11 Sept, 1886, 2), is thought to have come under Frank Smith's directorship sometime around 1884/5.¹¹ He had previously spent several years organising sporting events at the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel, in addition to managing his own hotel in the city. Harry Clay's initial engagement was to be the beginning of what he later described as an eighteen month association with Smith, and one which also included weekly engagements at the promoter's newly opened Alhambra Music Hall. It would be one of only two long term engagements in his career, the other being his association with American entertainer and manager, Dan Tracey. Acknowledged by those who knew him as a man who found it hard to take direction, it would seem that either Clay's association with Smith was a reasonably successful one in terms of professional standards, or that as a young man of twenty, his personality, professional attributes and strength of conviction had yet to manifest themselves in action or confrontation.

¹¹ Advertising in the Sydney Morning Herald in April 1884 shows that Frank Smith, proprietor of the Burrangong Hotel, was the promoter of the Sir Joseph Banks Handicap, an event run at the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel. Advertising for the Pavilion and Pleasure Grounds during the year, and notably in the same April issue, has no reference to him being involved with that operation (5 Apr. 1884, 2). By May the following year and thereafter, however, his position as its Director is regularly included in advertising. See the Sydney Morning Herald 30 May 1885, 2, for example.

Frank Smith's influence on the popular stage in Sydney and indeed on the city's social and leisure aspects was to be a significant one for a number of years. It is also likely that his professional style and enthusiasm for business deals were considerable influences on Harry Clay. He was to be one of the earliest of the leading variety entrepreneurs to give local performers both an opportunity, and consistent engagements. Although international artists under contract to Smith continued to attract top billing, this was not to the same extent as occurred in the programmes of either his immediate Sydney-based rivals or those like Harry Rickards, F.E. Hiscocks and Frank M. Clark¹² who operated in several of the major cities. Smith had been the proprietor of the Burrangong Hotel on the south-west corner of Hay and George Streets from around the early 1880s, and is attributed as having given Sydney its famous foot-running handicaps. Isadore Brodsky, in Sydney Looks Back claims that the organisation of these matches was done at his Haymarket Hotel, but that "after being written off at the Burrangong, which had shifted its licensed premises to a hundred yards farther north.... [he then] looked around for something offering a little more permanence" (15). Thus on the 25th of May 1885 Smith opened up the recently refurbished Haymarket Academy, situated on the corner of George and Campbell Streets (the old Mick Simmons corner) in the Haymarket district. Formerly a corn exchange, the then 700 seat theatre was renamed the Alhambra Music Hall by Smith¹³ (Sydney Morning Herald 25 May 1885, 5), and apart from occasional lapses, it catered successfully to the patrons of minstrelsy and variety well into the next century (Thorne 200).

Harry Clay's first engagement at the Alhambra came one week after his initial performance at the Sir Joseph Banks Pavilion. On the 10th of October he again performed "Thou Art So Near and Yet So Far," and appeared regularly throughout the rest of the year. Some of the songs presented by Clay prior to the end of 1885 were those he would become renowned for in later years, including "Dear Little Jessie," "When The Robins Nest Again," "Molly Mavorneen" and "Leave Me Not In Anger." During his engagement with Smith he would perform only in the first part, presenting either one or two numbers, and at varying positions during the program. It can be assumed, then, that he would have appeared onstage in the minstrel semi-circle learning his craft in a professional troupe with some of the best in the business. And while it is yet to be confirmed, there is also the likelihood that Clay would have regularly appeared in the farce segment of each show during his time with Smith (as well throughout his later minstrel career).

¹² Entrepreneur, manager, comic and farce writer, F.M. Clark (who had no known professional association with Harry Clay), leased the Gaiety Theatre in 1885 with Clark and Ryman's Red Stockings Programme. He later travelled to America in search of talent, returning in 1887 at which time he leased the Opera House and Academy of Music (1888) for his All Star Novelty Combination. In 1889 he presented his European Celebrities at the Academy; and in 1890 his Boston Ideal Company (Opera House). The same year, he and F.E. Hiscocks presented the English-American Specialty and Comedy Company at the Gaiety. Clark was also the manager of the Australian Waxworks Company (558 George St.). He is known to have continued in vaudeville management well into the 20th century, with productions at both the Sydney and Melbourne Gaiety Theatre, and Sydney's Queens Hall. It has also been recorded that Clark held a position with Universal Pacific Coast Studios in the United States ca. 1930.

¹³ Ross Thorne records that in 1887 the Colonial Architect indicated that the recommended seating accommodation was for 522 persons, although at that time of his inspection it had 894 seats (200).

Minstrelsy, or "nigger business" as it was invariably known, was easily the most popular form of entertainment in Australia and America between the 1850s and up until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Its demand in England during the mid-nineteenth century was also widely exploited, eventually transforming itself into that country's highly successful and exportable brand of variety - music hall. With regard to the early years of minstrelsy in Australia, Richard Waterhouse notes that:

Throughout the 1850s and 1860s solo blackface performers continued to entertain colonial audiences... in this period the structured minstrel show also became a commonplace feature of the Australian popular stage... mostly these early minstrel companies performed in the saloons attached to hotels... In the 1860s the influx of American minstrels into Australian colonies ceased... First, [because] the voyage across the pacific was long and hazardous as those intrepid performers who made the trip in the 1850s were only too willing to bear witness... and second, from the mid 1850s onwards, American accounts of the prospects of the Australian stage were particularly pessimistic... [However], in the 1870s American minstrelsy re-asserted its supremacy on the antipodean stage ("Blackface," 131-32, 136-37, 141).

**SIR JOSEPH BANKS PAVILION AND
PLEASURE-GROUNDS, BOTANY.**
GRAND SACRED AND CLASSICAL CONCERT.
SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

The following talented Artistes will appear on this occasion, who
the following Choice and Select Programme will be rendered
under the conductorship of
Mr. CHAS. AUSTIN.

1. American Overture "The Messenger" ... Orchestra
2. Ballad—"Gathering-up the Shells" ... Mr. A. Farley
3. Ballad—"Let Your Tears Kiss the Flowers" ... Miss Grace Follande
4. Martial Song—"Fair Land of Poland" ... Mr. A. Henricks
5. Ballad—"Turham Toll" ... Miss A. Rowe
6. Descriptive Song—"The Raft" ... Mr. H. Barrington
7. Nautical Song—"In Port" ... Miss Millie Herbert
8. Grand Selection—"Heart and Hand" ... Orchestra
9. Duet—"Home to Our Mountains" ... Mr. Henricks and Miss M. Herbert
10. Ballad—"Angels Listen when She Speaks" ... Mrs. Ryan
11. Ballad—"Steer my Bark to Erin's Isle" ... Miss Marion Saunders
12. Basso Song—"Simon the Cellarer" ... Mr. Herbert St. John
13. Ballad—"Dermot Astore" ... Miss Ida Francis
14. Ballad—"Thou art so Near and yet so Far" ... Mr. H. Clay
15. Ballad—"Heart of my Heart" ... Mr. H. Legate
16. Nautical Song—"Out on the Deep" ... Mr. H. Barrington.

N.B.—Tram fares to and from Botany, 6d each way.
Trams leave immediately after the entertainment.
Ladies and gentlemen will kindly retain their seats until termination of the performance.
The entertainment will commence, at 3.30 p.m., and terminate at 5 o'clock punctually.

Director, Mr. FRANK SMITH.

Plate 6

Programme for the first known performance by Harry Clay for Frank Smith at the Sir Joseph Banks Pavilion, Botany, 4 Oct. 1885.
(*Sydney Morning Herald* 3 Oct. 1885, 2)

Waterhouse further notes that "blackface entertainments played an important role in the emergence of an Australian popular stage" (142). As a genre, minstrelsy's primary purpose was to provide pleasure, with none of the pretensions of "legitimate" theatre - an ideology that undoubtedly informed Harry Clay's future career as a vaudeville entrepreneur. Indeed, Clay's vaudeville was a business which continued the traditions of minstrelsy right up until at least 1915 or so (and continued to return and/or reinvent its format regularly into the 1920s).

A typical Australian minstrel show would commence with an overture (orchestral or simply piano) and chorus sung by the entire cast, who would then seat themselves in a semi-circle, at the centre of which was the host, or interlocutor. On either side of him would be seated the rest of the company, with the flank positions occupied by the blackfaced endmen (who contributed to the evening with their tambo or bones). In larger companies a bevy of chorus girls (soubrettes) would be seated behind the semicircle, frequently becoming the object of endmens' attention during the show. With the interlocutor instigating and controlling the evening's proceedings, the role of the endmen, besides performing their own turns, was to toss around jokes at the expense of anyone present, particularly the interlocutor, whose demeanor was generally one of pomp and ceremony. After each artist in the company had presented their act - generally singing or comic turns - the first part would close leading to an interval.¹⁴

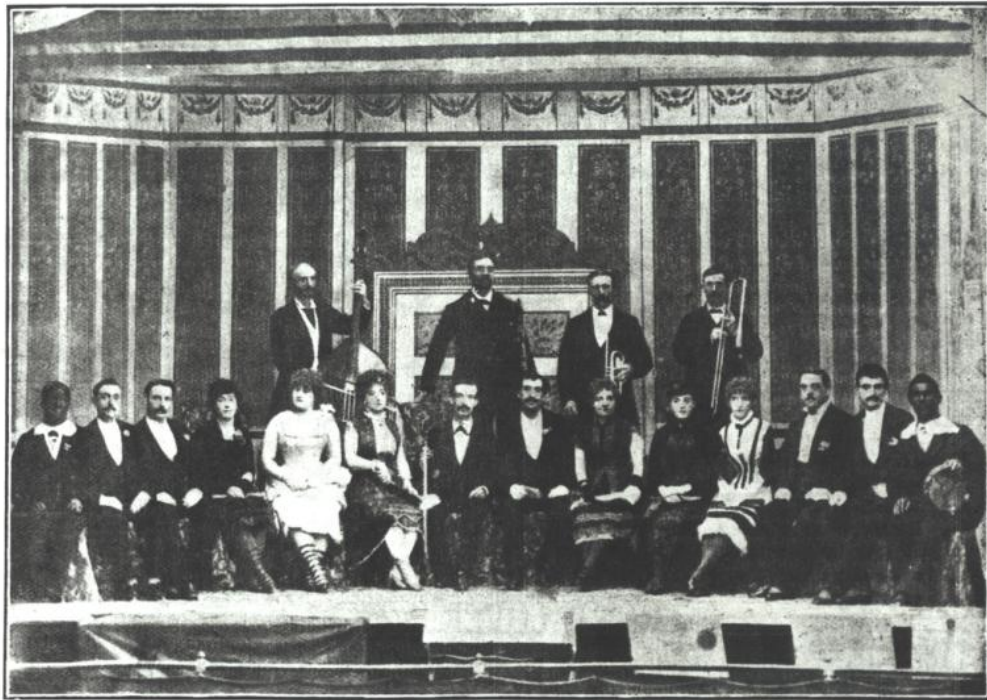
After the interval a second part overture would herald the start of the olio section, in which the various members of the troupe would return to perform solo or partnership turns, this time without the presence of the semi-circle. These turns - which generally allowed each artist to present their specialty act - would often be performed in front of a dropcloth, or backsheet, particularly if the following turn required some setting up with props or equipment. This allowed for the opportunity of a free flowing night of entertainment without long breaks for changes. This concept of "free-flowing" was not altogether possible, however, in view of the fact that the audiences of this period (and well into Harry Clay's era as a showman) would always demand encores (sometimes as many as four or five) if an artist was particularly pleasing. This created, one might assume, great difficulties for the stage manager, whose job it was to keep the program on schedule.

The olio section during the height of minstrelsy's popularity would also contain a stump speech. This was an American invention which saw one of the troupe, usually the interlocutor or an endman, present a humorous oration (often politically spiced) on a subject of his choice - invariably about some other current social topic, or on popular subjects such as women, mothers-in-law and bosses etc. Richard Waterhouse points out that these speeches, in which the orator would harangue "the audience, were such as to unite rather than divide them in their prejudices" ("Blackface" 135). The stump speech, however, was not as essential to the Australian model as the American minstrel show, and indeed, there is no evidence to indicate that it was ever part of Harry Clay's programs on his city circuit or Queensland tours.

This second part, being in fact the forerunner of the vaudeville concept, could contain at any time acrobatics and trapeze work, comic and patter turns (of the straightman and comic tradition), singing and dancing (whether solo, duets or trios etc.), feats of strength, and animal acts. Advertised programs indicate that there was an enormous variety of highly individual entertainments on offer throughout the minstrel and vaudeville

¹⁴ In the earlier American version (not popularised fully in Australia) an evening's entertainment would comprise of three distinct parts. The short farces presented in the Australian minstrel shows were invariably programmed as the second part's concluding attraction.

years. The olio could also include one or two performers whose special attractions were not previously included in the first part, and who were not perhaps regular members of the company. One of the most popular features of the second part, the farce (featuring several or all of the company) would typically end the evening's program.¹⁵ [See Plate 6 for an example of a minstrel programme from this era]



THE ALHAMBRA STAGE on May 24th, 1884. Back row: T. Milton, P. Slavin, -----, A. Parkes.
Front row: Johnny Gilmore, W. Ryan, C. Palmer, M. Mackay, Millie Herbert, Jennie Nye, C. Austin,
Harry Barrington, Grace Follard, Ida Francis, Nina Tulloch Arthur Farley, F. Phillips, Ted. Shipp.
Photo reproduced by the courtesy of Mr. Johnny Gilmore.

Plate 7

(Photograph courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)

Despite a comprehensive search through various primary sources (notably the Sydney Morning Herald), a great deal is yet to become known about Harry Clay's association with the Smith organisation - a period of time, as mentioned previously, he indicates as being some eighteen months in duration (Theatre Sept. 1914, 25). It is unclear, for example, as to the extent of his involvement with the company, especially in regard to the actual length and regularity of his engagement. A discrepancy occurs, for example, between Clay's recollection of his time spent with Smith, and the newspaper advertising which indicates that he was still engaged by the entrepreneur in late October 1887, some two years after his initial appearance at Botany. Contributing to this sense of confusion is the fact that his name is frequently absent from the advertised programs for both the Sir Joseph Banks Pavilion and the Alhambra during that time. The length of these periods ranges from 10 weeks (Jan - March 1886) to a 15 month period (June 1886 to the 7th of October 1887), the last date being the start of a three weekend season at Botany and the Alhambra, which seemingly

¹⁵ For further reading into minstrelsy - an entertainment as popular and dominant as we now consider cinema to be - see Richard Waterhouse (various articles), Robert Toll, Blacking Up, and Gary D. Engle This Grotesque Essence (further details in bibliography).

concludes his association with Smith. During the fifteen months Clay is seemingly absent from Smith's programmes his name is on several occasions advertised for short seasons at other theatres, including three Sunday Grand Classical Concerts for Sam Lazar at the Theatre Royal in late July/early August 1886. It may be assumed then that either Clay's memory was subject to fault or embellishment, or that a considerable portion of his engagement with Smith was of a minor and/or irregular nature.

What is known about Clay's time with Frank Smith's organisation is that his popularity saw the Sydney audiences quickly accepting him as somewhat of a local star. He also established a repertoire of several popular songs which enabled him, by virtue of the quality of his performance, to call them "his own." On May 22nd of 1886, for example, Clay is believed to have sung for the first time one of his most successful ballads, "Essie Dear" (Sydney Morning Herald 22 May 1886, 2). This song, which he later claims to have been his favourite - having sung it for over twenty-five years - would influence his and Kate's decision when naming their only child. While Harry Clay was not the first person to sing "Essie Dear" in Sydney, it is known to have been previously performed under the Smith management by Behn Hendrix as early as 1885 (Sydney Morning Herald 9 Nov. 1885, 2), he was the first in his rendition of a song called "White Wings." This enormously popular waltz-style ballad would be included in minstrel and variety programs for many years, and his version of the song was obviously not lost on the public's appreciation. It would be another song for which he became renowned and, as with "Essie Dear," would remain in his repertoire for upwards of two decades. Although Harry Clay's turns were most frequently of a solo nature, his engagement with Smith also included occasional duets or quartets. Of the latter, the most regular partnership was one which consisted of himself, John Matlock (American endman), Arthur Farley (basso) and Amy Rowe. Others of note to have been engaged by Smith during Harry Clay's time with the company include: Australian comic Charles Fanning, Harry Barrington (later to manage the Alhambra, and a long time Tivoli stage manager), Edwin "Ted" Shipp, Minnie Hope (later Minnie Shipp), George Gardner, Lucy Fraser, Millie Herbert, and Charles Austin (Smith's musical director and business manager at both venues).

Concerning Clay's whereabouts during the possible 15 month hiatus from Smith's organisation (and principally between his last engagement for Sam Lazar at the Theatre Royal in August of 1886 and his reappearance with Smith in October 1887) one can only speculate. There is no evidence at this stage to indicate that he had still been with the Smith organisation, or that he had been engaged by any other company for shows in the city of Sydney. While it is possible that he could have used his plastering experience to take on labouring jobs, this is unlikely in view of both Clay's personality, and the general attitude of performing artists at the time. Taking on non-theatrical work was not a desirable option for artists who considered themselves professional, as it lowered their standing amongst their peers. Evidence of this kind of professional pride would be on display at the industry meeting place known as "Poverty Point" - located at several corners in the city over some forty or so years. Here instead of finding, as one might expect, disheveled and destitute actors begging from passers-by as they waited on the mercy of theatrical

agents, well-groomed and well-dressed (often in the latest fashions) performers would congregate, waiting to see or be seen by representatives from the various managements. Talk would invariably focus on theatrical news and gossip (or just as often direct itself towards the next race or boxing match, and perhaps a wager or two).¹⁶ The pride in appearance exhibited by professional artists was not only confined to matters of dress, however, but also for whom and where they worked. In this regard most would have considered themselves above performing on the amateur stage, with this view no doubt being shared by Harry Clay. This argument is supported by the fact that despite extensive research there has been no evidence found which links him with any of Sydney's major amateur theatrical societies, including minstrel entertainments.

It is most likely that Clay found work with small professional suburban circuits earning a few shillings or so as a minstrel tenor, or through irregular engagements with small touring shows in N.S.W. country areas. In referring to these early years Clay is known to have mentioned only one specific country tour - which I believe to have been undertaken sometime around the end of 1888 and beginning of 1889. While it is highly probable that he accompanied other tours it is difficult at this stage to ascertain just how many he made and where. The assertion that he would have undertaken such work is based on a number of references by Clay to having travelled "the Australian states" as a performer. In this respect it is highly probable that he would have been known to many small-time managers whose opportunities lay in the suburbs and outside the metropolitan area. Indeed the reputation he is known to have firmly established along a number of regional touring circuits by the time of his own company's tours clearly indicates that he had been through those areas on more than one occasion. His popularity, status and credibility are acknowledged in several country newspapers by the time of his first Waxworks tour, providing evidence to support the claim that he had forged himself a reputation in regional centres well before 1901. The Tamworth News, of 1 March, 1901, for instance, indicates this prior to his Waxworks company's visit there the following week (3), as does the Maitland Daily Chronicle which records:

The variety company is a strong cast as it includes the names of Mr Sam Wilson... the Smith Sisters... little Essie Clay (the child vocalist who is a great favourite here), Mr Will Bracey... and, of course, the redoubtable Harry himself.... The hall should be crowded nightly, Mr Clay's name being sufficient to guarantee that he is bringing along first-class entertainment (14 Feb. 1901, 2).

¹⁶ Poverty Point has generally been associated with both vaudevillians and actors, particularly during the early film and depression years. Isadore Brodsky in refuting the claim that Poverty Point had become a vaudeville institution argues that it "is something that every theatre has created, everywhere... theatre is older than vaudeville, and there were Poverty Points before vaudeville" (93). Two earlier Poverty Points were located in Sydney, the first situated at the corner of King and York Streets in the 1890s, with a later one at the corner of King and Castlereagh Streets. The last, and perhaps the most well-known of Sydney's Poverty Points, however, was at the northeast corner of Pitt and Park Streets, also known as Marshall's Corner - a scene of animation where Harry Clay (the "King of Poverty Point") had his office. Charles Grahame notes that Bert Howard (the "Lord Mayor" of Poverty Point) would conduct his business on the footpath, "his office [being] a doorway, and [where] he would leave messages in chalk on the pavement" ("Poverty" 463). While the descriptive "poverty" was perhaps representative of the earlier days, it seems that by the second decade of the twentieth century the old title was essentially a misnomer.

GAIETY THEATRE.

Sole Lessee and Proprietor **MR. DAN TRACEY**
Business Manager **MR. ALF M. HAZLEWOOD**
Musical Director **MR. T. W. RHODES**

**SECOND YEAR OF DAN TRACEY'S
VAUDEVILLE
MINSTREL AND SPECIALTY COMPANY.**

First Appearance of

Edwin Shipp Endman and Comedian
Minnie Shipp Serio-Comic and Dancer
4—**Four Little Nursery Maids**—4
and **Fred Garnett**, the Original Dummy Clown.

PART 1.

Conversational **Alf M. Hazlewood.**
Our Lively Endmen: Our Lively Endmen:
Frank Yorke **Willie Warner**
E. Gaudier **Edwin Shipp**
Overture and Opening Chorus—"Estudiantina" Company
Bass Solo—"The Old Turnkey" **ARTHUR FARLEY**
Comic Song—"Another Color Now" **WILLIE B. WARNER**

Beautiful Graceful Double Serio-Comic Ladies,
Misses ANNETTA BODIN and IDA TAUCHERT.

Contralto Song—"Village School" **MISS AMY ROWE**

First Appearance of the Celebrated Endman and Comedian.
EDWIN SHIPP. **EDWIN SHIPP.**

Ireland's Patriotic Vocalist, **PAT ROCHFORD.**
Queens of Double Song and Dance,

Rosie **ABBOTT SISTERS.** **Gertie**

Ballad—"Thou Art So Near" **HARRY CLAY**
Serio-Comic Song—"Arthur and Martha" **MISS FLORRIE FORDE**
Local Song—"Is it Likely" **FRANK YORKE**
Now we Have the Lightning Change Artiste and Soubrette,
MISS RUTH WALLACE.
Introducing "How He Carries On," "The Old Flag," and Grand Tableau,
"Australia."

Selection— **PART II** **ORCHESTRA**

IDA TAUCHERT AND ANNETTA BODIN.
Sensational Double Song and Dance Artists.
Your Old Favorite, **FRANK YORKE**, in his latest Parodies.
First time of the Society Double Sketch Artists.
Edwin—THE SHIPPS.—Minnie.
Lightning Change and Serio-Comic Lady, **MISS RUTH WALLACE.**
Australia's Greatest Comique and Character Actor, **WILLIE B. WALLACE.**
First Time in Sydney of the
4—**MAGNETS.**—4
ROSIE ABBOTT—GERTIE ABBOTT—ROSIE HOWARD—BELLA HOWARD
As the "Four Little Nursery Maids."
Song—(By Universal Request)—"Divorced" **MISS AMY ROWE**
First Appearance of the Original Dummy Clown.
FRED GARNETT **FRED GARNETT**
Little Scottish Nightingale, **MISS AMY KENNEDY.**
Tremendous Hit of **MISS FLORRIE FORDE** in her Original Character
Specialty, "Bubbles."
Dublin's Great Song and Dance Man, **PAT ROCHFORD.**

Willie B. Warner's Screaming Farce.
THE NEW GUINEA CHIEFTIAN.

Dr. Bray **ARTHUR FARLEY**
Pete Splim **FRANK YORKE**
Harry Emmett **HARRY CLAY**
Chew Fat **WILLIE B. WARNER**

Plate 8

Dan Tracey programme at the Gaiety Theatre (Sydney) circa 1892
(Australian Variety 29 Dec. 1915, n. pag)

In relation to country touring after the 1880s, Clay in later years recalled several influential companies he had appeared with, including a Brisbane engagement in 1893 and two Queensland tours in the late 1890s. Thus it seems likely, in view of the almost immediate success he achieved with his own regional tours (discussed in later chapters), that he had been presented with a significant body of regional work throughout the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The argument is further supported when comparing other minstrel touring companies operating in the period, few of whom were able to establish themselves to anywhere near the same level of success (and so quickly) as people with the track record experience of Harry Clay, and in later years, Stanley McKay and George Sorlie. A common thread amongst the regional newspapers during Clay's Waxworks period, for example, was the fact that so many of the smaller visiting troupes failed to deliver the audiences expectations, or that their reputations were paper-made. The achievement of those like Clay, Sorlie and McKay was not simply their logistical expertise, but their genuine desire to return year after year (and often twice a year) - a desire which succeeded only through an intimate knowledge of the people and the areas they serviced. In an amusing sidelight to the aspect of regional touring in the "old vaudeville days when Frank Clark used to take companies out to the country towns," Clay recalls in 1919 that when "bad business came along, the artists never received a razoo, and those were the first to take their hats off to Frank when they landed back in Sydney" (Australian Variety 27 June 1919, 8).

Presenting further support to the argument that Harry Clay was frequently touring is the fact that his residential addresses during the period between 1885 and 1905 (at which point he stops appearing in his own tours on a regular basis) change almost yearly. On those occasions when he is in regular employment, however, such as with the Dan Tracey engagement, his address remains somewhat more stable. It is believed that Clay established himself in the Glebe area around 1887/8, these years being significant with respect to his marriage and the birth of his daughter. The boarding-house style accommodation that the family utilised during the next ten years or so was located primarily in the south-eastern housing estate area of Glebe, and included residences in Ebenezer Street, Talfourd Street, Phillip Street and Wentworth Park Road. Glebe historian, Max Solling, has traced the socio-geographic movements throughout the area bounded by Glebe and Leichhardt, indicating that the traditional working class groups (including cultures such as theatre industry workers) found the cheap housing and boarding accommodation in this portion of Glebe an ideal location during the mid to late 1800s. Thus while theatrical work was for the most part difficult to come by and poorly paid, living expenses were also quite low. And for someone in Harry Clay's situation, the opportunities presented through Glebe's close proximity to the central business district, its low accommodation costs, accessible public transport, and a highly interactive community of theatre workers, made the suburb an attractive proposition.

With regard then to Harry Clay's theatrical engagements during the periods he is unaccounted for, the specifics remain unclear. After the final engagement with Frank Smith in October 1887 his only known appearances to the end of the year were a couple of weekends at the newly opened Royal Bondi Aquarium. In terms of employment stability, however, 1888 was only marginally better for him than the preceding year. On the 11th of February Clay began an engagement for Walsh and King on the opening night of their Saturday evening concerts in the city's Protestant Hall. Located in Castlereagh Street, close to the Gaiety Theatre between Park and Bathurst Streets, the hall had previously been leased for several years by Harry Cottier and his family, who provided similar weekend entertainments. The popularity of these amongst the working class audiences was not simply because of the cheap admission (6 pence, with reserved chairs 1 shilling), but also to a great extent because of the quality of artists engaged during that time. Billed as Cottier's People's Concerts, they attracted performers of the calibre of Charles Fanning, Martyn Hagan, the Australian trio of Delohery, Craydon and Holland (Ted Holland was later to hold the position of Brisbane's premier vaudeville manager), Amie Blackie (later to tour with Clay's Waxworks and Vaudeville Co.), Minnie Hope, George Gardner, Kate Carey, Alf. Lawton, and Ida Tauchert (elder sister of "the sentimental bloke" Arthur Tauchert, and then a juvenile serio-comic artist). Even the well-known acrobatic troupe the Marvellous Girards played an engagement with the Cottiers in November of 1884.

There is no record of Harry Clay ever being engaged by Harry Cottier or his family for these People's Concerts, which in relation to his extensive involvement within the minstrel/vaudeville culture of Sydney during this period, prompts the question why. A comprehensive search of the Sydney Morning Herald between the years covered in this chapter indicates that in comparison to the great majority of his contemporaries, Clay seldom played the more significant community hall style engagements within the city environs during his early career - these being the type of show run by small time managers such as the Cottiers, Martyn Hagan, and occasionally Charles Fanning. And apart from his engagement with Frank Smith at the Botany leisure grounds, he only appeared on rare occasions at other "part-time" or weekend venues - places such as the Bondi, Manly and Coogee Aquariums. It is possible, for instance, that he was engaged by the Cottiers without advertised billing prior to or during his association with Frank Smith, as performers of this era are known to have often played several shows in one night unless under an exclusive contract to one management. It is doubtful that he would have continued to be included without billing from 1886 onwards, however, as by then his growing reputation would have ensured his inclusion in advertising.

There are two possible reasons to be considered with respect to Clay's exclusion from the Cottiers' concerts. One is that he was not invited, suggesting that his reputation for being difficult was already starting to emerge. The second is that he declined their invitations for whatever reasons. That Clay might have been constantly employed with other companies during the periods he is unaccounted for, and thereby being unavailable to appear for the Cottiers during their relatively long run at the Protestant Hall, is unlikely in

view of the irregular conditions facing almost all local artists. Adding further fuel to speculation is his appearance with Walsh and King, who for all extents and purposes were simply carrying on the tradition established by the Cottier family. A consideration might be that there was some conflict between Clay and the Cottiers, but this is doubtful as it is known that he teamed up with Harry and Lucy Cottier sometime around 1888/9 to form an all Australian based minstrel troupe. In light of this it seems that their relationship was mutually agreeable.¹⁷

The continuation of the People's Concerts in Sydney then was for a short time taken up by J.T. Walsh and W. J. King, and later by Martyn Hagan at both the Protestant and the Darlinghurst Halls. The Walsh brothers (King being a professional name) were natives of Boston, Massachusetts, and had been in Australia for some time before opening up a season in the city. James and William were exponents of trick dancing (advertising highlights in particular the Excelsior double-clog dance) in addition to being comics and singers. Harry Clay was engaged for their opening night on the 11th of February 1888, with the company also including: Johnny Cowan (comic and farce writer), Kate Carey, Martyn Hagan, Arthur Farley, and Walsh and King themselves. The company continued to play to good houses up until April of that year. On the 21st of that month, however, the company canceled its weekend entertainment following the death two days earlier of thirty-one year King, who'd apparently been severely ill during the previous two weeks. Advertising in the Sydney Morning Herald for the following weekend, and in successive weeks, suggests that J.T. Walsh was unavailable to continue as the troupe's proprietor, his name not being associated with them in any capacity.

This new troupe, with Harry Clay still involved, and with the initial inclusion of Rock Phillips, Frank Yorke, Charlie Horton, Harry Montague and Harry Carroll, continued to play at the hall throughout the year. It is not certain whether Harry Clay's association with the troupe was on a regular or a more casual basis during this time, however, as advertising does not always include all artists. A newspaper advertisement on the 17th of November 1888 indicates that the performance that night was under new management, with Clay's name included along with those of Fanning, Yorke, Carey, George Turner and ex-Cotters' musical director James Herman Newton. This troupe was still performing the weekend concerts into December. On the 22nd of December, however, the last known engagement by Harry Clay in 1888 appears to be a weekend concert at the Manly Aquarium, performing along with Harry Quealy, G.R. Faust, and the show's business manager, Harry Montague.

¹⁷ There were similar styled People's Popular Concerts run in Melbourne, too, which continued to run with few, if any, interruptions for well over half a century. The Cottiers, who are associated with the early Sydney operation, included Harry, Lucy, Ernest and Walter C. Lucy would become an established entertainer in Sydney over the years, as would Wal Cottier, renowned for his writing of "nigger" farces, and his long association with the Alhambra Music Hall. Wal was also married to Amy Blackie, one of the early performers with Harry Clay's vaudeville company.

Unlike the previous two years 1889 was to become rather successful for Harry Clay, at least in terms of regular appearances before the Sydney public. On the 16th of March a group of minstrel and variety artists, including Clay, opened a season at the new Haymarket Music Hall, under the name of the Federal Minstrels. Taking this name was to cause some considerable controversy, it having been associated with F.E. Hiscocks some years earlier (although his company had been disbanded by 1889). The new Federal Minstrels consisted of ex-Hiscocks' Federal Minstrels Beaumont Reade, George Turner (Interlocutor), Charles Holly and Frank Yorke (tambo), in addition to Harry and Lucy Cottier, Tom Buckley and Will Stevens (bones), Arthur Farley, Johnny Cowan, Lucy Fraser, and Arthur Sullivan. These artists represented some of the cream of local talent performing during the period but who like Harry Clay, were all too often struggling to find consistent work as imported companies and performers took the best opportunities. Some 25 years later Clay would point out Reade for special mention, commenting that "if [he were] alive today, he would send them all crazy. There are many alto voices, certainly; but his was the only alto of the kind ever heard in Australia" ("Performers" 25).

The new Federal Minstrels reportedly opened to a "vast audience" which led H. Florack, the lessee and company manager, to write an open letter through the Sydney Morning Herald. In thanking the audience for "the very generous patronage accorded [the company]," Florack also expressed his hope that "by CHANGING THE PROGRAMME as often as possible, and by supplying an entertainment entirely DEVOID OF ALL VULGARITY... [they would] continue to merit a fair share of patronage of the Sydney public" (18 Mar. 1889, 2). In this regard such an attitude towards clean and non-controversial entertainment supports the notion, argued by Richard Waterhouse, that "the humour of sexual innuendo... which characterised American Minstrel performances [was] almost altogether absent from the Australian programs." Waterhouse goes on to further point out that, "schooled in the tradition of refined English rather than coarse American minstrelsy, the [Australian] articulation of the values of an oppositional culture was anathema" ("Blackface" 132-33). This attitude towards respectable entertainment would also inform Harry Clay's entertainment philosophy.

Florack's letter to the Sydney Morning Herald was not to be the last published on behalf of the company, however, as on the Saturday immediately after their opening, F.E. Hiscocks announced in a strongly worded notice in the same paper that he had no connections with the company using the name Federal Minstrels, and accused them of using the name without his authority, a name that he claimed was registered to him (23 Mar. 1889, 2). In the following Monday issue, Florack responded to Hiscocks' attack with controlled venom. Drawing attention to the fact that there was presently no company known as Hiscocks' Federal Minstrels, he invited Hiscocks to see "a good many of the ARTISTS who have in so great a measure brought his name so prominently before the public, and have helped to build up his [Hiscocks'] fortunes." Florack ended his letter:

I would ask him [Hiscocks] does he expect the GENTLEMEN and ARTISTS who were some of the principal members of that well-known company, to walk around and await his pleasure for an engagement? If he does expect this, I leave the public to judge if he does not display a little of the "dog in the manger" spirit. We are in nowise connected with Hiscocks' Federal Minstrels but our ARTISTS stand ALONE, UNRIVALLED, in their various branches of the profession, and if Mr Hiscocks will only pay us a visit I think he will be obliged to admit that his old FRIENDS and artists are now performing as well, if not better than ever, and they will stick to their colours, and call themselves the FEDERAL MINSTRELS (25 Mar. 1889, 2).

To a large degree Florack's two letters contained in them the essence of complaint and professional practice that were to become essential policies of Harry Clay, along with arguably his most influential mentor, Dan Tracey. From the initial thank you letter responding to the public, comparisons can be drawn regarding Harry Clay's future organisation, which operated along two very similar principles. First, he pushed very strongly for continual changes to his programs - new artists, turns, revues etc; never allowing for audience boredom, and providing incentive for people to come to his theatres on a regular basis. For the city and suburban circuits this meant weekly changes, in addition to instigating a rotational system, whereby each of his companies (at one stage numbering six) would play anywhere from one to six nights at various venues, moving on to be replaced by the next company. On his Queensland tours the shows would be changed nightly. Second, he had little tolerance for "blue" jokes, foul language (despite his notorious reputation) or misbehaviour in his theatres, whether from the audience or from the performers ("Sometimes" n. pag.). Third, and this directly relates to Florack's attack on Hiscocks, Clay's strong desire to stand by and encourage local artists in the face of a tide of overseas imports was grounded in these early days of his career. He experienced the difficulties and the frustrations found in trying to secure work, not only because of his strong personality and clashes with management, but also because the lack of sustainable work was being compounded by American and British touring companies and individuals.

In support of this comes an anecdote published in Everyone's the week following Clay's death in February 1925. The writer recalls attending an early performance of a company from around this time which was under the management of Harry Clay, despite the fact that he would only have been in his early twenties. Billed as the Australian Eleven, "as it comprised that number of Australian performers, including Mr Clay, who acted as interlocutor, and also sang tenor solos" (25 Feb. 1925, 4), he further notes:

The manager (Clay) would come before the footlights (gas in those days) and make an announcement to the effect that he would like the audience to "give the show a chance, as they were all Australians and desired to prove that they could do as well as many of those who came from other countries..." ("Late" 4).

No record has yet been found of the Australian Eleven company playing any dates in Sydney, or at least in the city environs, but it is quite possible that the troupe is the one mentioned in the Theatre's 1914 article, as having toured the country areas of N.S.W. prior to a season at the Sydney Music Hall, or as it was officially known, the Haymarket Music Hall ("Performer" 25). Clay recalled having been one of the leaders of a

company that followed a Harry Rickards season at the theatre. Rickards indeed opened at the Haymarket venue in mid November 1888 with his Comedy and Specialty Company, closing it down on the 26th of January 1889. Thus it is more than likely that the Australian Eleven, with which Harry Clay was associated, was to become in 1889 the Federal Minstrels. This is quite feasible despite the fact that the theatre's proprietor, George Barr, presented a short season of minstrelsy between their lease of the theatre and the earlier Harry Rickards engagement.

The Federal Minstrels continued their run at the Haymarket until the end of May, providing weekly minstrel/variety entertainment, and the popular Grand Sacred Concerts on Sundays. Admission was kept low, with the "popular prices" of 6d or 1/-being charged. The Sydney Morning Herald reviews over the period indicate that the company maintained good audiences for most of its run which suggests that the quality of its performers almost all of whom were Australian artists was particularly good. In a comparison between Frank Smith's Alhambra shows and the Haymarket entertainment, the Herald notes that "in a less ostentatious, though equally successful, way the Federal Minstrels hold the Haymarket Music Hall" (6 May 1889, 8). The management by Florack, too, suggests an ability to cater to the public's desire with a variety of different offerings being presented over the course of the season. A review in the same newspaper notes, for example, that the presentation of a "tableaux vivant, representing the life and home of a drunkard, [was] well acted" (25 Mar. 1889, 4). And the season's minstrel presentation was broken briefly, too, by a short season of what was described as "black burlesque," when the company presented, by arrangement with Williamson, Garner and Musgrave, H.M.S. Pinafore. In the production Harry Clay played the role of Chafed Haystack, a send-up version of one of the original work's characters (Sydney Morning Herald 20 Apr. 1889, 2).

By the end of May the company had run its season, and again Clay's name fails to register in advertisements for any other companies until mid-August when he accepted a one week engagement with W.J. Wilson's Anglo-American Frolics. Comprising 24 English, American and Australian artists) the troupe played the Academy of Music (Sydney Morning Herald 17 Aug. 1889, 2). Advertising for this show indicates that he was still being referred to as Henry Clay, despite some previous reviews referring to him as Harry Clay, or more often than not, just Mr H. Clay. The following week the Great Faust-Perman Combination advertised "the first appearance of the silvery tenor, Mr Harry Clay" at the Haymarket Music Hall (Sydney Morning Herald 24 Aug. 1889, 2). Once again, it is not certain as to how long this engagement was for, as his name only appears in newspaper advertising on one other occasion prior to his involvement with F.E. Hiscocks' company in October. On the 31st of August Clay is among the performers listed for a benefit tendered to the popular cornet player and musical director, Herr Von Der Mehdren.¹⁸ The artists on the benefit's programme included Harry Leston (arguably one of the most consistently employed Australian actors

¹⁸ Von Der Mehdren was engaged by numerous companies as musical director, including a long engagement with the Fitzgerald Brothers Circus. Two of the Fullers' principle orchestra members in later years, Carl and Harry Mehdren (drums and trombone respectively) were his sons.

around the turn of the century, and a benefit regular), along with Arthur Farley, Harry Craig, and Harry Carroll, the latter three forming a quartet with Clay to sing "Spring's Delight."

The Von Der Mehren benefit, held at Her Majesty's Theatre, is one of the very few times that Clay is known to have attended such events as a participant. This is another enigmatic aspect of his personality and career, and perhaps relates to the perception of him by others in the industry. An extensive survey of Sydney Morning Herald advertisements regarding benefits held during the period 1885 to 1900 indicates that many artists were regularly invited or offered their services to these events as performers. In the early part of his career, it would be reasonable to suspect that Clay's exclusion was the result of his being a relatively unknown singer in Sydney circles. From 1889 onwards, however, his reputation was such that he would have been considered in the same class as any number of those local benefit regulars.

That Harry Clay is virtually never associated with this kind of event, and not just during the afore-mentioned period, but also throughout his later life, is just one of a number of perplexing aspects which relate to Clay's low-key involvement in the social circle of Sydney's theatrical population. Throughout the years he operated his own company, however, Clay was known to have supplied many free entertainments for charity or public causes - such as the 1922 Newtown Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, or in an attempt to raise money for the local Newtown Brass Band. In addition he sent companies to various institutions such hospitals (Australian Variety 7 Feb. 1917, n. pag. and 8 Feb. 1918, n. pag.); sanitariums (Theatre Nov. 1925, 5); orphanages (Townsville Daily Bulletin 17 May 1913, 3) and on one occasion an Aboriginal community near Ipswich (Queensland Times 16 June 1903, 7 - see Chapter Five for further details).¹⁹

In early October of 1889, Clay began a season with F.E. Hiscocks' London Pavilion Company at the Opera House, again billed as Henry Clay. Although most of the company had been imported direct from their London season by Hiscocks representative J. Saville Smith, advertising also stressed the "re-appearance of old favourites" including Clay, W. Horace Bent, George Turner and Beaumont Reade. The imports included John Fuller (the celebrated tenor from St. James' Hall), J. Whitworth, Morton and Sadler (billed as "Grotesque Ethiopian Character Delineators"), and Jolly John Nash - "Old England's Greatest Comique" (Sydney Morning Herald 5 Oct. 1889, 2). With Turner, Reade and Clay having been previously engaged for the unauthorised Federal Minstrels' season it would seem that at least with those three any of the ill feeling of the past had been forgotten. And in terms of gaining experience with the best in the business, this was without a doubt the finest opportunity he had so far been given.

¹⁹ These charity shows, which occurred reasonably frequently throughout the company's lifetime, are too numerous to record here. The above instances refer to the 1917 Grenfell Hospital and 1918 Randwick Military Hospital visits; a 1925 performance at the Waterfall Sanitarium, the 1913 Queensland tour's support of the Townsville Orphanage, and the 1904 visit to the Deebing Creek Aboriginal settlement.

The London Pavilion Company included some of the best talent to have played in the country, and as such placed the twenty-four year old tenor within a circle of professionals who could teach him the finer points of minstrelsy, particularly in relation to the interlocutor (a role he would later play for many years in his own company). In addition it presented him the chance to interact with (and assess the techniques of) the all-important cornermen. Indeed, it was in the company of men like the great endman W. Horace Bent, that Clay would be able to later impart his knowledge to performers in his own company. His recollection of Bent years later was that Australia would never again see his equal, assessing him as a member of the quartet of great minstrel performers that included Sam Keenan, Alf. Moyham, and Alf. Lawton. Having been associated in some way or another with most of the old-time minstrel performers, Clay considered Bent "the greatest nigger comedian the world has ever had, and absolutely the funniest blank ever born" ("Performers" 25).

The season with Hiscocks' London Pavilion Company also presented Clay his first acquaintance with John Fuller Snr, the father of Sir Benjamin and John Fuller Jnr, both of whom would later head one of two largest vaudeville agencies in Australia, and who would also become his major competition at Newtown. This tour was John Fuller's first to Australia, and as a tenor he came highly regarded. The Theatre records that although a compositor by trade Fuller "began singing in a humble way," before finding success with the Mohawk Minstrels and later the Moore-Burgess Minstrels, and then compelled by illness he sought a change of climate - hence his decision to accompany the London Pavilion Company to Australia (June 1923, 13). During the time Harry Clay spent with the company he and Fuller performed a number of times in a double quartet which also consisted of Beaumont Reade, George Turner, J.V. Doran, W.H. Harrison, J. Whitworth and a Mr Smith. Two of the songs they are known to have performed were, "The Cruiskeen Lawn," and "A Soldier's Love" (Sydney Morning Herald 4 Nov. 1889, 4).

The tour promoter, F.E. Hiscocks, with whom the Federal Minstrels had earlier quarreled, was another of the Sydney based entrepreneurs making his presence felt around the 1880s and 1890s. One of his first major investments in minstrel entertainment was to be his lease of the Sydney Academy of Music in Castlereagh Street (previously the Scandinavian Hall/Hotel) from April 1884, at which time he introduced his Federal Minstrel company.²⁰ Hiscocks also made a concerted effort to capture a Melbourne market for his operations, opening limited seasons there with the Federals for several years. These were generally held towards the end of each year, and followed short country tours through centres such as Goulburn, Wagga Wagga, and Albury. Hiscocks' career would continue with some success into the early to mid 1890s but eventually gave way to severe economic conditions of the depression, as well as in response to the rise of

²⁰ A Bijou style hall, it was renovated prior to Hiscocks' lease (the work included new oilcloth being laid in the passages). He opened his account there on the 5th of April with his original Federal Minstrels (Sydney Morning Herald 5 Apr. 1884, 2). Hiscocks later built and managed the Garrick Theatre on the same site, opening the new venue for business on the 22nd of December 1890 with a theatrical adaptation of Oninda's novel Moths (Sydney Morning Herald 20 Dec. 1890, 10).

Harry Rickards (and to a lesser extent, Dan Tracey) along with the sustained popularity of the Alhambra Music Hall shows.

Some of F. E. Hiscocks' more significant entertainment productions around the late 1880s and early to mid 1890s included: the New English Specialty Company, in partnership with Harry Friedmann; Charles B. Hicks' company the Hicks-Sawyer Coloured Minstrels; Gaylord and Silbon's Anglo-American Humpty Dumpty Troupe; the Silbon-Stirk Combination and of course, the London Pavilion Company. While Harry Clay's engagement with Hiscocks was not a long one, the latter's organisational and logistical management - as one of the major promoters of entertainment during the period - would have undoubtedly played a significant role in developing the young performer's entrepreneurial skills.

In January of 1890, following his season with Hiscocks, Harry Clay again found himself at the Haymarket Theatre, this time sandwiched for two nights between the closure of the 20 American Coloured Performers troupe, and the Dramatic and Burlesque Company production of Sweeney Todd. Engaged for the short season by George Barr, Clay's fellow performers included Edwin and Minnie Shipp, along with J.S. Porter and George Gardner (Sydney Morning Herald 16 Jan. 1890, 2). Between January and the 5th of November there is no record of his whereabouts, other than a reference by him in 1914 to having done some "skirmishing" in the country with different companies ("Performers," 25). By November, however, Clay is again advertised in a Sydney programme, this time returning to perform with the "unauthorized" Federal Minstrels as part of the Bondi Aquarium's "Prince of Wales Birthday Celebrations" (Sydney Morning Herald Nov. 1890, 2). The eleven member company, with only Clay and George Turner remaining from the original line-up, returned there the following week. The troupe did include, however, performers Clay had worked with before - these being Harry Cremer, Charles Fanning, and Kate Carey.

The following year Harry Clay's career took an upward trend when on the 30th of May 1891 he began a season at the Sydney School of Arts with Dan Tracey and his Vaudeville Minstrel and Specialty Company. Clay has been quoted as saying that he spent two and a half years with Tracey ("Performers," 25), but research for this thesis has so far been able to account only for an approximate eighteen month period lasting until December of 1892, at which point he is engaged by another company. It will be argued, nonetheless, that although seemingly of a shorter duration than the Smith engagement, Clay's time with Tracey was to be a considerable progression in the development of his own entrepreneurial aspirations. Given top billing among the new artists added to the company, he is described in Sydney Morning Herald advertising as "the popular tenor" (30 May 1891, 2) and the man "whose silvery tenor has gained him much applause" (6 June 1891, 2). The first seven months of his engagement leading up to the end of the year saw Clay work with a number of leading artists, several of whom would continue their association with him throughout much of his own entrepreneurial career, including pianist and musical director Prof. T.W. Rhodes and comic Wal Rockley. And it was also during this early part of his association with Tracey that Harry Clay "would

achieve a certain amount of distinction for his rendition of 'Elsie of the Glen' [along with some] other prominent tenor songs" ("Late Harry Clay," 4). Of greater significance, however, would be the influence Tracey's professional practice had on Clay's business ideology and organisational methods. In a sense it was similar to the lessons he'd learned through his association with Frank Smith and the Florack-led Federal Minstrels but arguably to a greater degree.

Dan Tracey, an American renowned for both his clog dancing and as being one of the finest exponents of Irish characterisations and witticisms to tour Australia during the minstrel era, had previously spent some six years with Billy Emerson, and later worked for companies including the Coghill Brothers, Harry Rickards', and Hugo's Buffalo Minstrels. By the late 1880s Tracey had formed an artistic partnership with another American dancer, Steve Adson, which led to the formation of Tracey and Adson's Comedy and Specialty Company in October of 1890. After an initial engagement at the Coogee Aquarium, they followed Harry Rickards' season at the School of Arts, opening on December 20th. The Tracey/Adson partnership failed to continue much beyond that performance, however, as advertising a few weeks later clearly indicates that the company was then to be known as Dan Tracey's Vaudeville Company, and without any reference to Adson's involvement or performance. When Harry Clay joined the company in May, it was in its 23rd week and continuing to maintain a huge following with the Sydney public, reinforced no doubt by Tracey's audacious promotional style - clearly reflected in his Sydney Morning Herald advertisements. Examples of this style include his "Seats by Auction" promotion, whereby he claimed that it was "the only way of satisfying an over-yearning audience" (11 July 1891); along with a Female Tug of War Contest (14 Feb. 1892). [*See Plates 7-14 for a comparison of advertising styles around this period*] The same style, though of a slightly less ostentatious nature can be seen in the formats and content of many of Harry Clay's Queensland and NSW country tours. [*See Plates 34-36*]

Dan Tracey's influence on Harry Clay was substantial. As Clay would do later, the American entrepreneur continued to redefine and extend his business organisation, asserting his own stamp of individualism into its running. Both, too, are believed to have had a very direct and uncompromising manner which would have no doubt created tensions within their business relationships. It has been acknowledged that with Clay this manifested itself in his relationships with his employers and managers ("Sometimes" n. pag.), while Tracey's attitude saw him at one stage on the receiving end of a combined attack from his Sydney competitors who found his advertising methods (and perhaps success) hard to take. As will shortly be seen Tracey's tenacious response was simply to taunt the opposition and continue as he had before. In respect of their showmanship, the similarity between the two saw each focus increasingly on the aspect of "variety" as the essential ingredient for their continued success. Both constantly promoted new scenery, new artists, new songs and new specialties in their attempts to woo audiences into attending their shows on a regular basis.

Variety for the two entrepreneurs, however, was also much more than just a collection of different turns put together for a night's entertainment. Tracey, like Harry Clay in later years, regularly reinvented or resituated the minstrel cycle through thematic interpretations; introducing frequent burlesque seasons (in Clay's case - revues, theme nights and pantomimes); or built spectacular sets, (as with Tracey's ship deck scenery in his self-written burlesque Life on the Open Wave in August 1892). In addition to these practices they both saw the advantage of filling their venues through extremely low admission prices. Minstrelsy, and to a lesser extent vaudeville (its variety offspring) was particularly accessible to the ambience of the audience, hence the decision by these two entrepreneurs to direct their attention and programs primarily to the working-class audience. Thus while the higher status of a Tivoli or Fullers show appealed to the refined audiences, the entertainments put on by those like Tracey and Clay were patronised by audiences who were themselves often part of the evening's performance. Furthermore, the prices charged for admission meant that many could attend shows regularly, and often more than once a week.

In this sense, while patron behaviour was strictly enforced, the success of the shows relied just as much on the interaction between performers and the audience, as it did on the quality of the artists. It should be noted here that while terms such as "low comedy" and "third rate" have been applied to the shows put on by companies such as Clay's, this reflects not so much on the type of humour or standard of the artists as it does on the type of audience who frequented them. Indeed, as Charles Norman notes in the interview included as part of this thesis:

Clay audiences were Clay audiences.... They knew the business. You had to please them. They knew a lot about it, and you couldn't kid them. Any act or acts that didn't have much talent - well they woke up to that pretty quickly. No, they wanted the best and they demanded the best let me tell you (Appendix H, 206).

That many artists employed by Clay and other B circuit managers like Bert Howard, Frank Reis, Jacky Landow and Ike Beck, to name a few, also worked for the A circuit organisations run by Rickards and the Fullers around the same time [*see Appendix A for details of known performers*] is evidence enough that the smaller companies also engaged quality artists for their circuits.

While Tracey (like Clay) utilised a low pricing structure and placed an emphasis on quality entertainment, he presumably did not see it as bad business to hire Australian or Australian resident performers. Indeed he often presented them as headline acts if their reputations demanded it. Of those engaged by Tracey during his two year reign as arguably the most successful minstrel manager in Sydney (as well as for a short time in Melbourne), some of the most popular and prominently advertised, were: W. Horace Bent, Charles and Bertha Fanning, Martyn Hagan and Lucy Fraser, Eddie Sampson, Tom Sadler, Billy Warner, Ida Tauchert, Arthur Farley, Will "the Black Diamond" Wallace, Fred Garnet, Alf. M. Hazlewood, Johnny Matlock, the Sherwood Sisters, Alf Lawton, Clara Spencer and of course Harry Clay. Almost all of these were either Australian born or artists who had settled in Australia on a permanent basis.

NEW HAYMARKET MUSIC HALL,

George-street, Haymarket.
 Lessee ... George Barr.
 Stage Manager ... Martyn Hagan.
 Musical Director—Herr von Mehden.

GREAT AND BRILLIANT SUCCESS.
 GRAND CHANGE OF PROGRAMME.
 OUR NEW FIRST PART.

Grand Overture—"Stradella" ... Company
 Comic Song—"Tell all them Children Good-bye" ... Frank York
 Ballad—"Will take you home again, Kathleen" ... Mrs J. Farrow
 Comic Song—"I haven't for a long time now" ... Master Eugene
 Masher Song—"The Dude" ... The Infant Wonder, Little Daisy
 Comic Song—"Golden Sword" ... W. Webb
 Ballad—"Come buy my pretty flowers" ... Miss Violet Kingsley
 Comic Song—"Keep a Moving" ... Chas. Fanning
 Ballad—"The Old Cabin" ... Miss Lucy Fraser
 Finale—"Uncle Jeff's Baby" ... Fanning, York, Hagan and Company

PART II.

Overture ... By Orchestra
 THE BEAUTIFUL WHITE STATUARY,
 with Prismatic Effects, by the entire
 FAUST FAMILY.

1. Defeat of the Gladiators. 2. Surprise, and Innocence Betrayed. 3. Tobias before Burying the Dead. 4. The Gladiators. 5. Entrance of the Baby Statue. 6. The Wrestler and the Little Peacemaker. 7. The Praying of the Innocents. 8. Scene in a Street in London. 9. William Tell. Group from a Statue Gallery.

The Australian Jubilee Singer, CHARLEY FANNING, in his Specialities, introducing his Wonderful Grisley Act.

HERR VON MEHDEH,
 in his great Musical Act on Tummelironicon, Methalphone, Bottles, and Xylophone, on which he will play "The Mocking Bird," with variations, and the life-like imitations of the bird.

GRAND RISLEY PERFORMANCE,
 with Single, Double, and Triple Somersaults, by
 TED and VICTOR FAUST. Master EUGENE as the DUMMY.

Miss LUCY FRASER,
 in her favourite Song "The Irishman's Toast."
 MARTYN HAGAN,

in his original Song "Welcome as the Flowers of May."

THE GREAT FOUR SONG and DANCE TEAM,
 Chas. Fanning, Frank York, W. Webb, J. Clune, in their Plantation Songs and Dances—"Sambo's Invitation," introducing their Black Marble Statuary.

The BROTHERS FAUST in their "Burlesque Musical Act," on bassoon and clarinet. They will also play a beautiful Selection on their Silver-toned Hand Bells.

To conclude, for the first time in Sydney, with the farce GOING HOME IN A BARREL. Characters by Miss Lucy Fraser, Martyn Hagan, Chas. Fanning, Frank York, and W. Webb.

MILLION PRICES 2s and 1s.

General Manager, FRED. DARK.

Plate 9

(Sydney Morning Herald 27 Oct. 1888, 2)

HAYMARKET PALACE OF VARIETIES

(late Haymarket Theatre)
 Lessee and Proprietor ... CHARLES HUGO.
 Business Manager... ALF SANTLEY

TO-NIGHT, TO-NIGHT, TO-NIGHT.

Grand Opening Night of the Popular Favourites,
 HUGO'S BUFFALO MINSTRELS,
 established 1879.

The only Company in Australia with a 10 years' unbroken record.

HEADED BY CHARLES HUGO,
 the KING of NEGRO COMEDIANS,
 And Miss PRISCILLA VERNE, the Charming young
 SOUBRETTE and SERIO-COMIC ARTISTE.

Our Original Prices, first introduced into the Australian colonies by Mr. Hugo—

Front Seats,	Gallery,	Pit,
2s	1s	6d.

TO-NIGHT,

Our Original First Part ON BOARD THE
 S.S. BUFFALO.

With New and Elegant Costumes.

TO-NIGHT,

FRED THE LESLIE BROS., WILL
 (under special engagement to Chas. Hugo).

Musical Wonders, Comedians, and Tumblers. Can Play
 on anything and everything.

TO-NIGHT,

TRACEY and ADSON

(under special engagement to Chas. Hugo),
 Irish Comedians, Dancers, and Variety Artists.

TO-NIGHT,

25 ACKNOWLEDGED STARS 25.

The finest array of Variety Talent ever staged in Sydney
 To-night, the cheapest and best show on earth.
 Two and a half hours' real genuine fun and amusement.

A full and efficient Orchestra.

Come and see and judge for yourselves.

R. T. WATERS,
 Agent.

Plate 10

(Sydney Morning Herald 15 Mar. 1890, 2)

SCHOOL OF ARTS

Pitt-street, Sydney.

Phenomenal Success of
HISCOCKS' FEDERAL MINSTRELS.
 THIS (SATURDAY) AFTERNOON,
 OUR SECOND GRAND MIDDAY PERFORMANCE.
 TO-DAY, SATURDAY, at 2.30 p.m.,
 EVERYBODY HALF-PRICE.
 For Schools and Families.
 TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT.
 Entire Change of Programme.
 More New Artists, and Special Engagement of the great
 Ethiopian Comedian.

FRANK TERRY.
 His first appearance in Australia.
 PROGRAMME.—PART 1.
 Interlocutor: GEORGE TURNER.
 Bones: W. HORACE BENT
 S. W. MORRIS.
 Tambos: HARRY HARGRAVE
 FRANK TERRY.

Overture, "How can I Leave Thee," Company; Ballad,
 "Venita," Miss Tessie Cleveland; Martial Song, "A
 Soldier and a Man," Mr. J. S. Whitworth; Serio-comic,
 "Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Sweetheart," Miss Lila
 Thompson; Ballad, "Let Me Dream Again," Miss Clif-
 ton; Song and Dance, "The Winning Jockey," Miss Amy
 Sherwood; Comic, "Pop the Ring Upon Her Finger,"
 Harry Hargrave; Selections on the Mandolin and Guitar
 by the Young Australian Students, the Misses Eva and Phoebe
 Levy; Ballad, "The Village Hero," Mr. Edward Lawler;
 Duet, "Molly and I and the Baby," Little Nellie Finley
 and Master Fred Saunders; Comic Song, "There are
 Things," W. Horace Bent; Spanish Song, "Sorrento,"
 Mr. Fred Spencer.

GRAND FINALE—THE FRENCH CONDUCTOR.

The whole to conclude with the side-splitting Farce,
 OLD BOREAS.
 The Army, L. Braham; Landlord, J. Whitworth; Hec-
 tor, Geo. Turner; Jasper, Harry Hargrave; Tonsorial
 Artist, Tom Jones; Armed Constabulary, Sam Morris;
 Old Boreas, W. Horace Bent.

The Management reserve the right to change this pro-
 gramme when necessary. Popular Prices. Orchestra
 Chairs, 2s; Stalls 1s; Gallery, Sixpence.

Plate 11

(Sydney Morning Herald 26 May 1894, 2)

TIVOLI THEATRE

Sole Lessee and Manager ... Mr. Harry Rickards.
 SUCCESS, PHENOMENAL SUCCESS, of

Mr. HARRY RICKARDS'

New Tivoli Minstrels and Specialty Company.
 TO-DAY, SATURDAY, TO-DAY,

TWO PERFORMANCES TWO.

THIS (Saturday) AFTERNOON
 Doors open at 2.30, commence at 3 sharp, and
 THIS (Saturday) NIGHT, at 8.
 MATINEE PRICES.—Dress Circle 2s, children 1s;
 Orchestra Stalls ONE SHILLING, children SIXPENCE;
 Family Circle SIXPENCE, children THREEPENCE.
 Programme EXACTLY AS AT NIGHT.
 THREE more New Artists To-day THREE.
 Important and Special Engagement of the Youngest and
 Most Marvellous Child Performer in the World.

Miss ALMA GREY.

Reappearance of one of Sydney's old Favourites,
 Mr. ALF. LAWTON.
 Reappearance of the charming Soubrette,
 Miss CLARA SPENCER.
 Gigantic Success, Enthusiastic Reception Nightly,
 of the Somewhat Different Comedian,

Mr. GEO. H. WOOD

who will this afternoon and evening produce for the first
 time in Australia his adaptation of the
 Screaming Farceful Comedy
 entitled

ABSOLUTE DIVORCE CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Mrs. Felix Loughbutton ... Miss Georgie Devoe
 Mrs. Felixia January ... Miss Marian Ainsworth
 Hezekiah Lillywhite ... Mr. Chas. Bovis
 Hannah Lillywhite ... Mr. Will. Bovis
 and Mr. GEO. H. WOOD as Felix Loughbutton.

THIS (Saturday) AFTERNOON and EVENING,
 inauguration of our Second Edition of Endmen.

Mr. GEO. H. WOOD
 on the end with Mr. ALF. LAWTON.
 Mr. SLADE MURRAY
 in more new Character Impersonations, including
 THE COLONIAL & CTL.

Miss TASMA SHERWIN
 will sing "Ernani Involami," by Verdi.
 Miss ADA BAKER
 will sing "The Canteener," by Ralfe.

Mr. HARRY FITZMAURICE,
 Selections from the Opera "Maritana."
 Mr. CHARLES FANING and Miss GEORGIE DEVOE
 in their new Double Act, entitled "Stranded."

Miss ALMA OBREY Mr. CHAS. BOVIS
 EMMIE MORRISON Mr. PERCY SHANNON
 SISTERS ANDERSON Mr. WILL BOVIS
 Mr. BILLY AKARMAN Mr. CLARENCE LYNDON.

Continued Brilliant Success of the

GAY COQUETTES

and LA FROLIQUE,

by our Tivoli Ballerinas.

Prices: 2s, 1s, and 6d. Plan at Paling's. Tel., 353.
 Business Manager, JOHN C. LEETE.

Plate 12

(Sydney Morning Herald 6 Oct, 1894, 2)

Amusements.
SCHOOL OF ARTS
THE VAUDEVILLE MINSTREL AND SPECIALTY COMPANY.

23rd WEEK. 23rd WEEK. 23rd WEEK.

Sole Lessee and Proprietor ... Mr. DAN TRACEY.

This Company is an established fact in Sydney, and is
acknowledged to be
THE BEST VARIETY SHOW
in Australia.

CHANGE AGAIN.

A NEW PROGRAMME.

NEW ARTISTS ADDED TO-NIGHT.

HARRY CLAY,
the Popular Tenor.

MARTINI,
the Wonderful Horizontal Bar Performer.

HENRICH HOFFMANN,
Lightning Sketch Artist (just arrived from Germany).

REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD SEE THIS
COMPANY:—

1. It is without an equal in Australia.
2. It is refined and amusing
3. Members of the clerical, medical and legal professions constantly patronise it.
4. Every artist engaged is a specialist, that is makes a study of doing one thing well.
5. Twenty-three distinct items are given every evening, including

SONGS
DANCES
HORIZONTAL BAR
LOCAL LIGHTNING SKETCHES
FARCES
DUETS.
TUMBLING
JUBILEE SONGS
FINALES

6. But by no means the last. If you can find a better show in Sydney do not come to this one.

COME EARLY, because last come worst served, and—
remember

SIXPENCE will admit you to the Show, but you can get
better seats for ONE SHILLING,
and still better for TWO SHILLINGS.

GRAND AFTERNOON PERFORMANCE every Saturday
Admission—Adults, 1s Children, 6d.

LOOK OUT FOR NEW STARS, ALWAYS COMING.
MOREFIELD RACES.

SCHOOL OF ARTS.
THE VAUDEVILLE MINSTREL AND
SPECIALTY COMPANY.

52nd WEEK. 52nd WEEK.
FIRST YEAR. FIRST YEAR.

Sole Lessee and Proprietor ... Mr. DAN TRACEY

Re-appearance of the Charming Soubrette and
Popular Song and Dance Artist,
Miss IDA TAUCHERT.

FANS for the USE of our FRONT SEAT PATRONS.

The New Scheme of
VENTILATION
has successfully cooled this Hall.

NEW BURLESQUE TO-NIGHT.

CINDERELLA.

BY OUR UNIQUE SPECIALISTS,

ANY ONE OF WHOM
is able to
ENTERTAIN THE WHOLE AUDIENCE,
should the
INFLUENZA
unfortunately prostrate the others.

CINDERELLA. CINDERELLA.

CINDERELLA

will be
preceded by a
MINSTREL SPECIALTY SHOW,
introducing

NEW SONGS NEW DANCES
NEW SPECIALITIES,
ad libitum and ad valorem.
In spite of
PROTECTION PROTECTION,
we still do a
FREE TRADE.

COME EARLY IF YOU WANT A SEAT.
FRONT EASY CHAIRS, TWO SHILLINGS.

BACK SEATS, ONE SHILLING.

GALLERY, SIXPENCE.

GRAND AFTERNOON PERFORMANCE
EVERY SATURDAY
at 2.30 o'clock.

Admission—Adults, 1s; Children, 6d.

Plate 13

(Sydney Morning Herald 30 May 1891, 2)

Plate 14

(Sydney Morning Herald 12 Dec. 1891, 2)

Day sale tickets at Davis's, Bourke-street.

G A I E T Y T H E A T R E.
Sole Lessee and Proprietor Mr. Dan Tracy.

GIGANTIC SUCCESS
Of
DAN TRACY'S
NEW MINSTREL and SPECIALTY COMPANY.

The House was
At Half-past 7. { **PACKED
JAMMED
CRAMMED
SARDINED.** } At Half-past 2.

Not Even Standing Room.
Working Men, Bring your Wives,
Single Men, Bring your Sweethearts,
Old Men, Bring your Grandchildren,
To see the Greatest Entertainment in the City
Popular Prices: Front seats, 2s.; second seats, 1s.; gal-
lery, 6d.

DAN TRACY'S LATEST SONGSTER.
Buy it, read it and don't forget it.
Dancing Taught Without a Master, price 6d., on sale at
the theatre every evening.

Plate 15

(Age 17 Feb. 1892, 8)

Sydney, 14th July, 1892.

Amusements.

S C H O O L O F A R T S.
Sole Lessee and Proprietor, Mr. Dan Tracey.

**SECOND YEAR of DAN TRACEY'S VAUDEVILLE
MINSTREL and SPECIALTY COMPANY.**

DAN TRACEY'S VAUDEVILLE SPECIALISTS.

DON'T BE STARTLED.

It is nevertheless a fact
that these are

THE LAST NIGHTS

THE LAST NIGHTS

of
DAN TRACEY'S COMPANY
at
THE SYDNEY SCHOOL OF ARTS.

**LAST WEEK
LAST WEEK
LAST WEEK.**

REXO and RENO
and
THE THREE RINALDOS
are leaving Sunny New South Wales,
and
DAN TRACEY
is leaving the Sydney School of Arts,
but

TO-NIGHT there will be **TO-NIGHT**

A MAGNIFICENT PROGRAMME.

A SPLENDID PROGRAMME.

THE BEST PROGRAMME IN SYDNEY,

when
Miss AMY ROWE,
the beautiful Australian premier Contralto,
will

MAKE HER FIRST APPEARANCE.

In these dull times,
When laughing is a luxury,
We are still supplying smiles
At the old prices.

For two hours and a half.
NOVELTY FOLLOWS ECCENTRICITY,
and
SPECIALTY TRIPS THE HEELS OF VARIETY.

A TROOP OF REFINED ARTISTS,

with
Joke, Song, Dance,
or other unnameable absurdity,
will

MAKE YOU FEEL SO HAPPY.

that you readily forgive your friends, and invite
your enemies to see the
LAST NIGHTS

of
TRACEY'S COMPANY,
at
The School of Arts.

ADMISSION—

FRONT SEATS ...	...	...	...	TWO SHILLINGS
BACK SEATS ...	...	...	...	ONE SHILLING
GALLERY...	...	...	...	SIXPENCE.

MATINEE EVERY SATURDAY.

AT 3 O'CLOCK.

for Ladies and Children.

ADULTS, ONE SHILLING.
CHILDREN, SIXPENCE.

THE FORTHCOMING MUSICAL EVENT.

Plate 16

(Sydney Morning Herald 16 July 1892, 2)

Not content to remain bound to the N.S.W. capital, Tracey let both the Sydney and Melbourne public know in early February 1892 that he had become the new lessee of the southern capital's Gaiety Theatre, and that he fully intended his occupation of the venue to be a long one. A week after the announcement (the 13th of February) he opened there with a company (which included Harry Clay) while at the same time maintaining his Sydney operation. The Melbourne enterprise was an immediate success, and by July of that year, in full entrepreneurial fashion, he began displaying his style to the Melbournians, offering patrons in the first two rows coupons for a drink or cigar, while gallery patrons were entitled to a glass of beer. Indicative of the level of success Tracey achieved through his audacious attempts to woo the public away from other minstrel and variety venues was the reaction of his competitors. On the 19th of February 1892, for example, a deputation of Sydney concert hall managers met with the N.S.W. Premier to discuss Tracey's right to hire the School of Arts, and to ask the Minister to cancel his license. Tracey responded through the press to this attempt to shut him down, claiming that this was "one of the greatest compliments yet paid to [his] management," and leveled a challenge against his detractors, saying "if the public prefer TRACEY'S SHOW at the SCHOOL OF ARTS it is proof that the public, who are the best judges consider it is the BEST VARIETY SHOW in Sydney... WHY NOT HAVE FAIR COMPETITION." Elsewhere in the advertisement he taunted them mercilessly:

Deputations may to the minister go
To shut up Dan Tracey's vaudeville show
But the minister will very easily know
That it's jealousy makes them do it.

(Sydney Morning Herald 20 Feb. 1892, 2)

For Harry Clay the Melbourne season was enormously successful. At one stage he was able to occupy the top position in the first part of the program - this being the second last turn prior to the interval - and by March was being advertised in the Age as "The Premier Robust Tenor of Australia" (Age 12 Mar. 1892, 10). His return to Tracey's Sydney company in May, at which time he was described as "the Favourite Tenor" also saw him appear as the headline act (Sydney Morning Herald 7 May 1892, 2). In August of that year, after Tracey moved his Sydney operations to the Gaiety Theatre in Castlereagh Street (located between Bathurst and Park Streets and not to be confused with the later Gaiety Theatre in Oxford Street), Clay was again the highlight of the bill. A Sydney Morning Herald review notes that "the tenor solo of Mr Harry Clay [was] received with enthusiasm" (2 Aug. 1892, 2). By September it seems that there was little doubt as to Harry Clay's popularity with critics and audiences alike when the Herald recorded that "Messrs. Clay and [Charles] Hudson won the approval of the house by their rendition of the duet 'Brave Pilot.'" Further to this, the paper's reviewer wrote that "Mr Alf. Hazlewood... the interlocutor, and Mr Frank Yorke and Mr Harry Clay were heartily applauded for their contributions" (5 Sept. 1892, 2). Clay's popularity and success during his tenure with Tracey afforded him further opportunities to learn from the esteemed company he performed alongside, especially artists such as Bent, Fanning, Hazlewood, and Warner. The techniques of the various

interlocutors were perhaps the most important in terms of his learning curve, however, as it was to be the role he carried out in the early years of his company's operations. And indeed reports from the early Clay's Waxworks and Vaudeville tours indicate that he functioned in this role to much acclaim.

An exact date for Harry Clay's departure from the Tracey organisation is not known, although he was still being advertised as appearing on the programs up until early November 1892. It is believed that Dan Tracey continued on at the Sydney Gaiety Theatre until sometime in mid February 1893, at which time his name is no longer associated with the venue. The minstrel entertainment continued to operate there for a few weeks after Tracey's departure, although there was to be no manager or management indicated until Alf. M. Hazlewood took on the position in early March. Tracey returned to management later that year with his lease of the Imperial Opera House at the end of June, but some four weeks or five weeks later he was once again forced to close down. To a large extent his career, as with F.E. Hiscocks', more than likely suffered from the effects of both the financial depression and Harry Rickards' increasingly competitive efforts in the popular entertainment industry.

For Harry Clay, too, 1893 was to be a year of ups and downs. In January he was engaged as both tenor vocalist and stage manager with Walshe's Novelty Company for their season at the Gaiety Theatre, Brisbane. Owned and operated by Ralph Walshe (who had previously been Dan Tracey's manager in Melbourne) the company also included Kate Clay (as she was billed), who sang and appeared in the farces, as well as his daughter Essie, aged about seven years. Others engaged by Walshe for the tour were Eddie Sampson (interlocutor), James Craydon, Ted Holland, Frank Yorke, Alf. Lawton, Clara Spencer (Brisbane Courier 28 Jan. 1893, 2). Unfortunately, the intended four week season closed after only one week due to the arrival of the Brisbane flood. There is at this stage no record of the family's movements during the next four or five months, although it is known that they didn't accompany other members of the troupe on a Queensland tour under a different management. Harry Clay records that "he returned to Sydney" ("Performers" 25), and indeed newspaper advertising in June of that year shows that he was to make his debut for Harry Rickards at the Sydney Tivoli Theatre on the 12th of that month. His recall of this engagement as being only three or four months in duration was not altogether accurate, however, as research shows that it extended for a somewhat longer period. Billed both as Harry and Henry Clay during his association with the English theatrical manager, his reputation was ostensibly one of an established local star, with his performances being (as usual) solo turns, occasional duets (notably with the operatic baritone, Henry Craig), and more than likely including regular appearances in the farces. During his time with Rickards, too, he is thought to have first performed another of his most successful songs, "Sadie Ray."

It would seem that in comparison to the other companies he worked for, the Rickards engagement was not one especially favoured by Clay. In mentioning the association many later years later he certainly does not go into any detail other than an acknowledgment of the length of time he spent with the company. This is

somewhat surprising, as an association with the Tivoli organisation would have undoubtedly been looked upon as prestigious. It could be assumed, for instance, that as a business competitor Clay may possibly have not wanted to associate his past reputation with that of Rickards. This is an unconvincing argument, however, as the Tivoli company was recognised as Australia's premier vaudeville organisation almost from its start, and any Australian performer of note played an engagement for it at some point in his or her career. What can be ascertained though, is that Clay did receive headline billing on a number of occasions during his time with Rickards, but also that he was not employed on a regular weekly basis for the whole engagement. This claim is supported by an advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald which notes: the "Re-appearance of Mr Henry Clay, the popular tenor vocalist" (15 July 1893, 2).

Regarding his popularity with audiences during the Rickards engagement, it seems that Clay was able to at the very least maintain the momentum of his earlier success under Tracey's banner, with reviews of his performances being generous throughout his stay. A writer for the Sydney Morning Herald proposed, for example, that "One of the best contributions in the first part of the programme was Mr Henry Clay's rendering of the tuneful ballad "Log Cabin in the Dell" (7 Aug. 1893, 2). It is notable, too, that when in December of that year W.H. Palings released their annual Christmas songster, one of the songs, "Dear Little Jessie," was advertised as being sung by "Mr Harry Clay [of the] Rickards' Company" (Sydney Morning Herald 16 Dec. 1893, 2). This association with Rickards also saw Clay performing alongside some of the best minstrel artists on the Australian popular stage at that time - with Alf. Lawton and Clara Spencer, Fred Dark, George H. Wood, Priscilla Verne, J.S. Porter and Harry Craig being among the most well-known at that time.

Between the end of July and the start of October there is relatively little mention of Harry Clay with regard to Rickards operations, although it is apparent that he was still under the British entrepreneur's direction. On the 14th of August he appears at the second of only two Grand Complimentary Benefits he is known to have attended - this time as part of Harry Rickards' contribution to the Coghill Brothers' benefit at the Tivoli Theatre. Some of the other contributions were from the Fitzgerald Brothers' Circus, Alfred Dampier and the Theatre Royal Company, and several members of Walter Bentley's dramatic company. Following this, the next record of him performing is on the seventh of October that year, on which date he accepts an engagement (along with Florrie Forde, who was to later establish an international reputation) at the Bondi Aquarium's Grand Sacred and Classical Concert.

Two weeks after the Bondi engagement Clay appeared on the opening bill of Rickards' new (and short-lived) venture at the Alhambra Music Hall. The New Paragon Minstrels and Vaudeville Company as it was known, was to be an addition to Rickards' stable of entertainment activities. As Isadore Brodsky describes it, Rickards "turned on the full limelight for this venture... and a long and remunerative run was anticipated" (16). Unfortunately for all concerned, the expectations for the Alhambra season did not eventuate. Despite

the show's advertised "enormous success" (and the apparently considerable renovations) Rickards closed down its operations a few weeks later claiming that he wanted "to devote his whole time and attention to the management of the fashionable Tivoli Theatre" (Sydney Morning Herald 30 Oct. 1893, 2). With a company consisting of performers of the calibre of Percy Shannon (interlocutor), Charles Pope and Fred Davys (tambos), Irving Sayles and Dan Tracey's ex partner, Steve Adson (bones), along with Arthur Farley, the Leslie Brothers, Charles Fanning, and Bovis and Franks there is little doubt that it would have been a popular show with the audiences.

The season's surprising brevity, in marked contrast to the crowded audiences reported to have turned up each night, remains somewhat of a mystery. It is not unreasonable to suspect, however, that the severe effects of the depression could well have contributed to Rickards' decision to contract his business rather than risk further expansion. As Douglas Doghlan records in Labour and Industry in Australia, "the absolute nadir [was] reached with the failure of the banks over the years 1891-93. Altogether twenty-two banks failed in Australia between July 1891 and May 1893" (qtd. in Irvin Gentleman George 168). The collapse of the financial industry during this period understandably forced non-essential businesses, including the theatre, to reassess or close down operations. Those with sufficient monetary reserves or the necessary business acumen, as the Rickards organisation seemingly had, could continue in business but not without considerable risk, and hence the entrepreneur's strategy to consolidate his Tivoli operations.

The decision by Rickards to abandon what would have seemed a highly lucrative opportunity for local artists could only have been a major disappointment to Clay and other leading Australian performers. The closure of the Alhambra venture compounded the already unstable conditions faced by the vaudeville community, particularly after the theatre's eight year continuous management under Harry Barrington (for Frank Smith) had finished early in June. It simply closed another avenue of opportunity for those performers not considered among the elite. This situation, in conjunction with the British entrepreneur's preference for (and deference to) international artists would not have sat well with the Australian tenor, whose engagement with the Rickards organisation was in itself a relatively short one. The demise of the Alhambra Music Hall venture effectively reduced by half the opportunities for local artists in Sydney. And this was at a time when the vaudeville and minstrel culture in the city and indeed throughout the colonies was experiencing severely downgraded employment and working conditions. It can be assumed that a certain amount of disappointment if not tension would have arisen between the two self-motivated and strong-willed showmen. As a consequence, it is hardly surprising to find Clay almost immediately shifting his career path into suburban venue management - organising and running shows for the working class people, the majority of whom were not having their needs met through Harry Rickards fashionable and more exclusive entertainment philosophy.

TIVOLI THEATRE.
Sole Lessee and Manager ... Mr. Harry Rickards.
CONTINUED UNABATED SUCCESS
of

Mr. HARRY RICKARDS

and his New Tivoli Minstrels and Specialty Co.

OUR MOTTO

Always something New and Original.
TO-NIGHT (SATURDAY) TO-NIGHT.
STILL ANOTHER CHANGE.

First appearance at the Tivoli Theatre of

Mr. JOHN S. PORTER,
the great operatic Baritone Vocalist.
Re-appearance at the Tivoli Theatre of
Mr. HENRY CLAY,
the popular Tenor Vocalist.

Enormous Success of
THE TWIN SISTERS ANDERSON,
the Artistic Song and Wing Dancers.

Continued Gigantic Success of

Mr. GEO. H. WOOD,
the somewhat different Comedian.

Unprecedented success nightly caused by the
very latest London craze,

DADDY WOULDN'T BUY ME A BOW-WOW.

By our

ARTISTIC LADY VOCALISTS and DANCERS.

Continued Triumphant Career of

Mr. HARRY RICKARDS,
who will introduce To-night Mr. Albert Chevalier's
latest version of

MY OLD DUTCH, &c., &c.,
TO-NIGHT (Saturday) TO-NIGHT.
AN ENTIRE NEW FIRST PART.

A GRAND PARLOUR OLIO,
AND A SCREAMING FARCICAL COMEDY,
in which the following Brilliant Artists will take
part:—

Mr. GEO. H. WOOD

Mr. Alf. Lawton
Mr. Fred. Davys
Mr. Henry Clay
Mr. John S. Porter
Mr. Fred. Dark
Mr. Billy Akarman
Mr. Henry Townley
Mr. Henry Burton
Mr. Robert Hearne
Mr. John R. Keers
Mr. George Wade
Mr. George Vassr
Mr. Robert Keers
Mr. William Crook
Mr. Thomas Reed
Mr. John Burrell
Mr. Jas. Kealing
Mr. Joseph Larkin
Mr. Sam. Wilson
Mr. Arthur Stibbs
Mr. Mo. Skinner

Katherine Vincent
Miss Friscella Verne
Miss Clara Spencer
Miss Elsie Merella
Miss Georgie Devos
Miss Lillie Anderson
Miss Honi Rickards
Miss Josie Chippendale
Miss Marion Ainsworth
Miss Carlotta Meotti
Miss Ida Murray
Miss Ellen Wilson
Miss Ettie Croucher
Miss Lillie Ward
Miss Maud Dickinson
Miss Dora Selwyn
Miss Mable Lovell
Miss Ada Norman
Miss Montague
Miss Katie Rickards

and

Mr. HARRY RICHARDS.

Still the same. **MILLION PRICES.** Still the same.
Dress Circle and Orchestra Stalls, 2s; Stalls, 1s; Family
Circle, 6d; Boxes, £1 1s. Plan at Faling's.
Telephone 353.

TO-MORROW, SUNDAY, TO-MORROW.

Our twenty-ninth Grand Sacred and Classical Concert.
Admission Free on application to the Manager.
Business Manager, JOHN C. LEETE.

Plate 17

(Sydney Morning Herald 15 July 1893, 2)

Interestingly, the often stated claim that Rickards "gave many Australians their start" is exceedingly questionable (see for example Brisbane 73 and Philip Parsons 502). It would have been highly unlikely that any inexperienced vaudevillian walked off the street and into a Tivoli engagement, but rather more probable that they had gained their "starts" from less recognised quarters. Rickards was not above employing Australian performers, and giving them an opportunity at the premier level if they merited it, but his (and his audience's) exacting standards required him to employ only those with established acts (and reputations). These claims, which effectively extend Rickards' role in the development of Australian artists, unfortunately also serve to devalue the importance of the lower stratum of theatrical management, which included, along with Harry Clay, such people as Martyn Hagan, the Cottiers, and later, J.C. Bain, Bert Howard and Harry Sadler to name a few. It was these organisations which were in fact very much responsible for nurturing the starts of some of Australia's biggest acts.

Following the end of the New Paragon Minstrels' season, and subsequently his engagement with the Rickards organisation, Harry Clay returned once again to the Bondi Aquarium for a one-off Sunday appearance at the end of November. Between the start of 1894 and September 1898, however, there is very little mention or record of his career, other than his own brief recollections. According to the Theatre's 1914 article ("Performers" 25), it seems that around this time Clay spent three to four years running a suburban show in Sydney based at St. George's Hall in Newtown (located less than a hundred metres from the Newtown railway station). His association with this venue is thought to have been in the role of manager, in addition to any other entrepreneurial activities required of him by its proprietors. St. George's Hall had been a popular facility for the local Newtown community for several years by the time of Harry Clay's association with it, having been used as both a skating rink and theatrical entertainment venue under the leasehold of Messrs. Kron and Co during the late 1880s. And it was under their management that even W. Horace Bent worked briefly as a stage manager and performer in 1888 with the St. George's Minstrels. Another significant company to open a season at the hall around this time was the Perry Ryan and Harry Hastings-owned XLCR Minstrels and Specialty Company.

Whether or not Clay instigated a circuit of any description during this period is also difficult to ascertain, as his operations (as will be discussed in the following chapter) seldom relied on the use of newspaper advertising during his early career, especially in established locations within the metropolitan area. It is unlikely that such a circuit operated under Clay's management, however, as he himself indicates that it was not until 1903 that he began running his shows around the Sydney suburbs. It is thought, then, that the "three or four years" he mentions in relation to the post-Rickards period was spent managing shows at St. George's Hall, Newtown, after which he "then took to Brisbane, and through the north of Queensland, the Continental Vaudeville Company" ("Performers" 25).

With respect to Clay's recall of these events, naturally some caution is required. For example, he occasionally refers to himself as having "run" or "taken" shows during his early career, indicating more of a proprietor type position, whereas evidence tends to indicate that his role was somewhat less than that of an owner or leader, but rather one of employed management. His operations at St. George's Hall, for example, provided a venue for both local community needs and touring or circuit companies. This required the services of a manager to co-ordinate the various activities - a position which Clay's previous experience would have certainly suited. In support of this are several secondary sources which indicate that it was as a manager of the St. George's Hall that he was identified during this period ("Audiences" n. pag. and "Sometime" n. pag"). It is quite possible, however, that he also organised other social events (in addition to his own shows) at the venue.

Concerning the validity of Clay's recall of past engagements there is, for example, the matter of his "taking" the Continental Vaudeville Company on tour through Queensland in late 1898. Although he did indeed tour the north with that company as a singer, his managerial role to all extents and purposes was reportedly that of the troupe's stage manager. While this position suggests a lesser involvement than that indicated by Clay, it can still be considered a highly important position due to the fact that the stage manager would have been responsible for not only individual shows, but also for a tour's logistical organisation. Irrespective of this, while his name was regularly advertised as being in charge of stage duties, it was undoubtedly through his voice and stage presence that he began to establish his reputation in Queensland. During the tour Clay's reviews were almost always highly complementary, and as the following example shows, his collaborative efforts were equally regarded: "One of the best items of the evening was the duet 'All's Well,' by Messrs Harry Clay and Walter Edwards, for which they were obliged to respond to an enthusiastic encore" (Northern Miner 11 Nov. 1898, 2). This tour is the first time known that Clay and Edwards worked together, and it was to be the beginning of an exceedingly close friendship between the two, matched only by Clay's close relationships with other longtime associates Ted Tutty, Jimmy Boyle, Maurice Chenoweth and Stan Kerridge.

Advertising in several newspapers, including the Brisbane Courier and the Northern Miner shows that the company was being run by J. L. Travers, with the business manager being Mr (Prof.) J. Surgam (also the troupe's equilibrist/balancing act). Another performer touring with the company who would later become long-time Clay employee was Walter 'Wal' Rockley (then working in partnership with his brother Alf.). Others included Tom Edwards (who also worked for Clay in later years), as well as Clay's wife (performing under the name Kate Henry), and daughter Essie, now aged ten. Essie Clay was being promoted as having only recently concluded a successful season with the Rickards' company, although the relative merits of her success are questionable in light of reviews conducted during that engagement. Indeed, it would seem that

her brief time with Rickards, ending much earlier that year, was not a totally happy one at all.²¹ With regard to Harry Clay, however, the tour would seem to have been especially favourable, and according to press reports in later years when he returned with his own company, he made quite an impression. [*See Chapter Five for aspects regarding Clay's northern reputation*]

The Brisbane season at the Opera House began on the 23rd September 1898, with the highlight being the special short engagement of the American athlete, Lucifer and continued with great success until the 8th of October, at which stage the company proceeded north. The tour's biggest regional success was its eight night season at the Theatre Royal, Charters Towers. The northern mining capital had long been a goldmine (pun intended) for visiting companies, and the relatively new Theatre Royal²² was one of the most popular, as well as one of the largest theatres in the north. The company's promotion, run by advance representative²³ Ernie Duncan, focused heavily on the highly positive and flattering Brisbane reviews - stressing "reports" along the lines of "EVERY ARTIST AT THE TOP OF THE TREE...." and as the 10 November issue of the Northern Miner records:

Direct from the Opera House, Brisbane and the principal Vaudeville Theatres of the Australian colonies. Vide the Brisbane Courier: "Without doubt the best all round Vaudeville company ever seen in Queensland" (1).

Using opening night responses in the advertising - a "TRIUMPHANT SUCCESS, Every Artist Vociferously encored....." and "the Audience Simply Stupefied," was indicative of the company's advertising campaign. With word able to spread quickly through the community, however, it is unlikely that such publicity would have been used if the troupe had not been able to deliver, and therefore we can assume that it in no small way reflected their popularity with the audiences.²⁴ In support of this are later reviews in the Northern Miner which point out that "the previous success of the company was fully sustained" (14 Nov. 1898, 2) and that "there was no diminution in the attendance" (17 Nov. 1898, 2). Indeed, the tour's success would have undoubtedly influenced Harry Clay's interest in returning to Queensland with his own show, having by now encountered, and in many ways having possibly been responsible for, part of the tour's logistical organisation.

After the northern excursion, the Continental Vaudevillians presented a return season in Brisbane before making their way back down through NSW. This time the company set itself up at the Theatre Royal,

²¹ One review of Essie Clay's performance at the Tivoli recorded that the "child balladist was not heard to advantage in a song entitled 'My Mother was a Lad' as it was evidently unsuited to her register" (Sydney Morning Herald 4 Apr. 1898, 4).

²² The Theatre Royal at Charters Towers was given its Grand Opening Night on June 28th 1893. It was initially known as Gough's Hall, due no doubt, to the influence of its original owner and manager W. Gough who also ran the town's Excelsior Hotel. The opening night entertainment was provided by James MacMahon's D'Ensem-Doyle Company, who claimed to have been booked for a later show at the Chicago World Fair in September. The lead attractions in the company were Bessie Doyle (violinist) and M. D'Ensem, a Spanish baritone. The theatre seated 1,200 people.

²³ The role of the advance rep for these country tours is examined in more detail as part of Chapter Five.

²⁴ Chapter Four looks at aspects of the country audience's perception and relationship with touring theatrical shows, particularly with regard to the idea that many companies were simply out to take money away from the regional communities.

are once more engaged for a Queensland tour, this time with Walter Bell's Waxworks, Boer War and London Vaudeville Company. While the lack of easily obtainable records is unfortunate, it can be assumed that the Clays, and Harry in particular, continued much as they had in previous years, most likely with a combination of suburban shows and country tours. Research suggests, however, that there were no large scale Queensland tours undertaken by any of the Clays between 1899 and 1900. Further to this, a comprehensive survey between 1894 and 1900 of the Northern Miner and Toowoomba Chronicle (two newspapers servicing these principal touring towns of the era), also indicates that the only tours through Queensland by Harry Clay and his family (or at least those where their names are mentioned) were those with the Continental Vaudeville Company and Walter Bell's company. It is likely then that any such regional tours, and again it is probable that these occurred, were undertaken in the southern states, and primarily N.S.W.

It is likely that Harry, along with Kate and Essie, was sequestered by Walter Bell for his Queensland tour because of his previous reputation and experience in the state. It is quite clear, for example, that Clay was the headline act amidst a company billed as "14 Star Artists." Other performers of note included "Australia's premier coon singer," Maud Fanning (sister of Charles, and a later Clay regular and tourist who joined the tour in Townsville), as well as Harry Cowan. The entertainment also included a cyclorama- style canvas of battle scenery from the Boer war, advertised as being some 10,000 feet in length, along with a "splendid collection of [wax] models of notabilities in the royal, historic, political and tragic world" (Northern Miner 18 Sept. 1900, 2). A number of these models were to be included in Harry Clay's waxworks collection as part of his inaugural Queensland tour the following year.

Bell's tour, which had an itinerary remarkably similar to the one Harry Clay was to use the following year, was not as up-market as that offered by the 1898 Travers-led company, but was in many ways just as (if not more) successful. While the Continental Vaudeville Company concentrated only on the principal locations such as Brisbane, Charters Towers and Rockhampton, Bell's route also included a number of smaller towns, in addition to engaging longer seasons along the circuit. In Charters Towers, for instance, their season ran for over two weeks as opposed to the earlier tour's eight nights (and it is thought that the season was actually cut short because a local individual contracted the bubonic plague). This tour was another experience of significance for Harry Clay, with many of the operational aspects undertaken by Bell later being reproduced Clay's own Queensland tours. In this regard the tour will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

In conclusion it only needs to be said that the Walter Bell tour was to be the last organisation that Harry Clay is known to have worked for prior to launching his own 25 year theatrical business. And in this matter he stands, along with Harry Rickards and the Fullers, as arguably one of the only three Australian vaudeville entrepreneurs to have risen to the highest level without recourse to performing with other managements or organisations during the course of their business careers.

CHAPTER THREE

CLAY'S VAUDEVILLE COMPANY: THE EARLY YEARS, 1901 -1915

Vaudeville in those days was wild and woolly. It was a cut-throat battle between the promoters for audiences. Clay's shows were the best [and] he needed to expand....

("Sometimes," n. pag.)

The first decade or so of Harry Clay's career as a variety entrepreneur remains to a large extent an unknown quantity. As a fledgling small-time Australian manager he had neither the resources nor, as will shortly be discussed, the need to use extensive newspaper or trade journal advertising during his early years (apart from his forays into the regional centres of Northern NSW and Queensland). In Sydney he primarily serviced suburban centres and the working-class leisure seekers, thus requiring promotional strategies of a different nature to those of say Harry Rickards, or in later years, the Fuller-Brennan operations. Naturally, comparisons with these rather more prestigious organisations dictated that Clay's shows be relegated in the minds of many as being "third-rate" (McPherson, 18). This sentiment would continue to dog Clay's reputation throughout his life, a situation of which he was well aware from the start. During an interview with the Theatre magazine in 1911, he points to this problem - suggesting that many "suburbanites" have the impression that his company must necessarily be inferior to city based shows because it caters directly to non-city based audiences (Oct. 1911, 29).

It becomes apparent, too, that Clay's steady rise as a variety entrepreneur during the first nine years at least, was largely ignored by the metropolitan trade magazines, newspapers and non-working class audiences (apart from country audiences). And similarly he had no use for them. Chapters Three and Four will demonstrate, as indeed did the previous one, that Clay's management style was honed from years of experience in the industry, and from a hard-nosed business attitude. With a reputation for trusting no one, despite the close relationship he had with his small band of loyal managers, and possessing an innate ability to tightly control the complex financial and logistical aspects of his business, Clay became renowned for keeping his fingers on the everyday pulse of his company - even to the extent of auditioning virtually all those who wished to work for him. And he maintained this work ethic right up until his stroke in 1921.

The difficulty in finding primary source material relating to the early years of Clay's vaudeville company, apart from newspaper advertising and reviews for his N.S.W. and Queensland tours, is hardly surprising in view of the circumstances surrounding both his business dealings and the perception of him by many within the industry. In this sense he was simply a novice, attempting to do what many had tried to do before him. With regard to his name or operations being mentioned in newspapers and trade magazines during this early period, for example, it is not until he begins advertising in the Theatre in June 1909 that that publication

starts to seriously recognise his organisation. A comprehensive search through this particular monthly publication between 1905 and 1909 shows that Clay and his operations are mentioned less than a handful of times. And it would not be until the arrival in 1913 of Australian Variety and Show World, a magazine which during its early years devoted itself almost exclusively to vaudeville, that he would join the ranks of the well-publicised. Long before this, however, significant sections of the theatre-going public had found in Harry Clay's theatrical management much that was desirable. And as this chapter will indicate, they patronised his shows like no other suburban/country entrepreneur before him, and arguably, after him.

Harry Clay's career as a variety entrepreneur is believed to have begun in 1901 with his first tour of Queensland - an excursion of some six months which saw him revisit a number of those regional centres where his name as a tenor and minstrel performer was already held in high regard. Advertising for the second tour in 1902 indicates that between these two northern visits the company also travelled through Victoria and Tasmania. Whether or not he continued to tour other centres outside NSW and Queensland between the 1902 and 1903 tours is unknown.²⁵ According to the 1914 Theatre profile, however, he is reported to have opened up his Sydney suburban circuit in 1903, in addition to the Queensland tours ("Performers," 25). And it is during this period, leading up to around 1905, that he is known to have engaged the likes of George Sorlie, Bert Howard, and Harry Sadler for these Sydney shows.

For the first five years of operations Harry Clay's weekly itinerary consisted of the following locations:²⁶

City (Masonic Hall)
North Sydney (Masonic Hall) [Saturday nights]
Newtown (St. George's Hall)
Petersham
Balmain
Parramatta

Of these, it would be the City, Newtown and North Sydney areas in particular (albeit in different venues) that would continue to act as strongholds for his company right through until the late 1920s. As the previous chapter foreshadowed, St. George's Hall was to become an essential element in Clay's plan to forge his own suburban circuit. It was undoubtedly an important centre in the social lives of the Newtown area residents, easily accessed by public transport, and an ideal place from which Clay could open his account as a Sydney entrepreneur. An article in the Newtown Chronicle indicates that the venue had been closed for some time prior to August of 1903, and that it had been extensively renovated before being reopened. The report notes that "it is quite evident that [the hall] fills a long-felt want in the western suburbs for those who desire a suitable place in which to give first class entertainment on a large scale" (10 Oct. 1903, 3). It is most likely, then, that having been closely identified with the hall in previous years, Harry Clay began his suburban circuit with it as his foundation base.

²⁵ Information concerning all of Harry Clay's Queensland tours (including the NSW legs) will be dealt with in Chapter Five, as well as Appendix C.

²⁶ For further information regarding Clay's Sydney and NSW country circuits 1901-1929 see Appendix D.

It has become clear that the other two venues (these being the North Sydney and the inner city locations) were also strategically important in terms of Clay launching his suburban circuit. The North Sydney Masonic Hall, situated on the corner of Walker and Mount Streets, was another popular community centre having been used for "theatrical entertainments, lectures, Concerts, Balls etc." from around 1887 ("To Let" 2).²⁷ And as with St. George's Hall it is believed that Harry Clay's first shows here would have occurred sometime after his return from Queensland in 1903. According to an advertisement placed in the Sydney Morning Herald by the venue's agents, G.T. Clarke and Co, the hall accommodated over 600 people seated and contained the main Lodge Room, supper room, ante-rooms, caretaker's quarters, and two large shops ("St. Leonards" 2). Harry Clay's highly successful association with the North Sydney area was to be one which would last almost the entire life span of his company, and is very much a result of the reputation he built during his early years at the St. Leonard's Hall.

The Masonic Hall located in the city, on the corner of Castlereagh and Goulburn Streets (and not to be confused with the old Masonic Hall in York Street, opposite the markets) was to be another of Harry Clay's prime locations. It had been a place for popular entertainments from the early 1880s, and played host to a number of theatrical and minstrel/vaudeville companies who competed for audiences at similar low cost venues, particularly the Protestant Hall. Little is known about Harry Clay's five year association with the venue, but suffice it to say, it allowed his name to become recognised among the city centre's population, and provided a launching pad for his even more successful venture at the Standard Theatre beginning in 1908.

Clay's Sydney shows and logistical organisation were run along the same lines as his country tours. In terms of the entertainment, he continued the traditional minstrel format with its semi-circle first part followed by the second part vaudeville section and concluding farce. It has been noted, too, that by 1905, as with the Queensland tours, his shows often included animated pictures as part of the second half entertainment (Theatre Oct. 1905, 13). With regard to methods of promotion, however, Clay's city circuit was far more cost effective than the country tours as these shows required virtually no newspaper advertising. His method was simply to get children or youths to put dodgers advertising the forthcoming week's programme into the letter boxes of the local community in return for free tickets to the show. He would also have daybills posted around each suburb to catch the eye of the locals, many of whom attended the shows on a weekly basis. These advertising practices were also part and parcel of his NSW and Queensland tours, but were an

²⁷ Almost always referred to as the North Sydney Masonic Hall, the venue was officially known as the St. Leonard's Masonic Hall. Formally opened by Lodge Samaritan No 50 on the 7th of January 1884 ("Lodge Samaritan," 12-13), it was eventually purchased by Sydney dance instructor Ernest Needs in 1905 (around May/June). Needs remodelled and refurbished the venue creating, as the Theatre notes, a venue in "the latest and most up-to-date style" (July 1905, 15), and included for the first time a stage in the main function room.

addition to newspaper advertising - a requirement brought about by the once or twice a year visits, as opposed to regular weekly shows.

During the first decade Clay's Sydney circuit seldom changed venues or suburbs. His company's popularity among the Newtown, City, North Sydney, Parramatta, Ashfield and Petersham audiences was such that he continued to play these suburbs on a virtually continuous weekly basis. In 1908, for instance, the North Sydney shows were being presented on Friday nights rather than Saturday nights. This change was brought about when the company moved from the city's Masonic Hall to the Standard Theatre (previously the Royal Standard). The better conditions of the latter venue, in addition to a larger capacity and its attraction as a Saturday night theatre for city audiences no doubt influenced his decision. And indeed this theatre (often referred to as Clay's Standard Theatre)²⁸ can be considered as Harry Clay's premiere venue up until the opening of the Newtown Bridge Theatre in 1913, due to the large attendances regularly claimed for his shows.

There are several indicators which suggest the level of success that typified Harry Clay's operations in his first ten year period as an entrepreneur, one being the cash purchase of 218 Glebe Point Road (mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis) within days of his company's return from Queensland. Another is his foray into serious theatre, with the sending of a dramatic company through Queensland around September-November of 1908, while in the following year he again acted as producer, touring well-known Scottish actor Walter Bentley and a company (including Clay's daughter Essie) through the same state. Although these tours are as yet the only known dramatic productions sent out to regional centres by Clay (he is known to have presented serious drama at the Standard theatre in 1909, and at least one season of the same at the Newtown Bridge Theatre in 1915), he also sent a pantomime company through the north in 1911, this time under the direction of Stanley McKay.²⁹ Clay's association with McKay, the energetic founder of the Sydney Muffs amateur dramatic society, is believed to have begun in April 1909, with the Easter week presentation of Uncle Tom's Cabin at "Clay's Standard Theatre," directed by McKay (Theatre May 1909, 18). [*These tours are also dealt with in Chapter 5, and Appendix C*]

²⁸ Located on the southern side of the city's fire station in Castlereagh Street between Liverpool and Bathurst Streets, the original hall was built by the Royal Order of Forresters. In 1886, Frank Smith remodelled the venue, naming it the Royal Standard Theatre. Reopened on the 8th of May in the same year, its first tenants were Alfred Dampier's Dramatic Co. ("Royal Standard" 6). The Royal Standard later became a silver coin theatre for the purposes of vaudeville and minstrelsy, seating some 960 to 1,000 people (Thorne 198-99) - and was leased by the Fuller family (among others) who struggled in it during the early years of this century, trying to lay the foundation of their theatrical empire (Everyone's 4.267 1925: 16). Known briefly as The Empire (during the Fullers' period) it was renamed the Standard Theatre shortly before Harry Clay's lease of it in 1908. Advertising, reviews and general references concerning Clay's shows at the venue published in the Theatre from October 1909 regularly refer to it as "Clay's Standard." For an example of this, see the review of Doris Williams engagement in J.C. Lees' Out on the Castlereagh, in the October 1909 issue, page 18. The Royal Standard was demolished in 1925 (Theatre May 1926, 41).

²⁹ McKay produced Walter Bentley's enormously successful Hamlet season at the Criterion Theatre shortly after presenting "Uncle Tom" at the Bridge Theatre, and immediately prior to Bentley's Queensland tour for Harry Clay. For more information on McKay, see Appendix G

Although details regarding Clay's operations during the first ten years or so are scarce, research has nonetheless provided at least some idea as to several key figures engaged by him during the period. Understandably, the time periods in which they were involved are not always known. As mentioned previously, however, George Sorlie, Harry Sadler and Bert Howard are known to have played significant roles in Clay's first few years. Howard,³⁰ later to become one of Harry Clay's rivals for Sydney's suburban audiences and who kept his smaller organisation going right up until the end of the vaudeville era, recalls briefly his time with Clay:

I'd been interested in the boxing game ever since I was a newsboy selling papers down at the Quay....until Harry Rickards got hold of me and made me his office boy and valet. Working for the Old Man gave me a good all-round knowledge of vaudeville, and being able to use my fists helped a lot when I stepped out into the suburban theatres with Harry Clay.... I was everything from manager to chucker-out, and a manager had to be a fighter then. Lots of times Harry, Wally Edwards and I had to tame the natives, and hold out the pushes without calling in the cops. Bang! Slam! Crash! Either they went out or we did! (Howard 104).



Plate 19

St George's Hall, Newtown 1922
From the Newtown Diamond Jubilee Souvenir: 1862-1922, p. 14.
(Courtesy Mitchell Library, NSW)



Plate 20

St George's Hall, Newtown ca. 2007
(Courtesy of Guy Wilkinson (Ghee) at www.flickr.com)

³⁰ Information concerning Bert Howard and Harry Sadler are included as part of Appendix G. Information about George Sorlie, and primarily his time spent as part of the Clay organisation is included within Appendix F.

While it is known that Howard divided his time during the first ten years or so of the new century between Clay's and J.C. Bain (Australian Variety 16 May 1917, n. pag.), he also recalls in the same article that, "being a showman is like being a punter. The things you remember are your big wins, or your long successful stretches. Nine months with Harry Clay in Queensland...." (Howard, 104). To date it has not been possible to locate the specific year in which Howard was associated with one of Clay's Queensland tours, although this is not unexpected due to his role probably being that of production and/or stage manager, and hence his name not being mentioned in the regional papers.

Of the others whose engagements helped give Clay's company its reputation during this first ten year period, the names which stand out are those of Ted Tutty, Wally Edwards, Frank Herbert, Harry Elliot, Stan Kerridge, musical director T.W. Rhodes, Joe Rox, Will Wynand, and perhaps to a lesser extent Will Gilbert - he being involved towards the end of the period, but who continued as one of Clay's senior attractions well into the 1920s. [*Information regarding some of these artists is included as part of Appendix E and F*] But it is Tutty and Edwards, both of whom established careers in excess of twenty years with Clay and whose names were inextricably linked to that organisation, who stand out. Tutty, the blackface cornerman and comic, who toured Queensland on no less than seven occasions, was a consistent drawcard for shows, and deemed by one Theatre commentator as being to Clay "what Irving Sayles was to Harry Rickards" (Oct. 1914, 35). Edwards, the popular baritone who had worked with Harry Clay in 1890s, was along with Jimmy Boyle, Clay's most trusted lieutenant.

One aspect to have become increasingly clear as the research for this thesis unfolded has been the number of artists and staff who maintained long associations with Harry Clay. Indeed, the consensus of opinion among his employees was not just a matter of expressing marked deference to their boss, but overwhelmingly supports the general impression of Clay as being a remarkably consistent and fair employer. Both Charles Norman and Thea Rowe recall their treatment under his regime as being wonderful experiences (see interviews in Appendix H), and Roy Rene similarly recalls his time with Clay's as being "like one big happy family, a laugh a minute on and off [stage]" (Rene 43).³¹ Clay's reputation in the press of the day also indicates that his "geniality" was common knowledge. The "Audiences Were Tough When Harry Clay Ran Vaudeville" article notes for example that although giving "the appearance of being tough with his actors, his quiet kindness often cost him money" (n. pag). The writer then relates an anecdote regarding Mark Time, an English comic who had a disastrous opening night at the Bridge Theatre, but who nonetheless was the recipient of Clay's generosity. It is claimed that Time got himself an on the spot engagement with Harry Clay (without an audition) on the strength of his credentials but that:

³¹ See Appendix I for selection of quotations concerning Clay and his reputation with both employees and the general public - notably Arthur Morley (1918).

His error was in fortifying his courage with plenty of Dutch courage... [the] result [being that] he got his lines mixed while his voice came out in great croaks. Clay called him from the wings: "Mark Time. Are you ready? Quick march!" As the little Englishman was leaving the theatre, Harry Clay slipped a 5 pound note into his pocket (n. pag.)³²

The contemporary perception of Harry Clay can best be illustrated through the following piece published in the Theatre in June 1909, which also serves to indicate not just his reputation with the public, but how he was finally being recognised within the industry:

In building up his City and Suburban Vaudeville Company into the success it is to-day, Harry Clay has succeeded where dozens before him failed. Harry takes the liveliest interest in every individual turn, revelling in it if it is at all good with the enthusiasm of a youth who is at an entertainment for the first time in his life; and on the other hand, sympathising with the performer, and trying to drop him a serviceable hint or two, if the item is not what it ought to be. As for the performance itself, the stage-manager of a mammoth pantomime could not be more taken up with his first-night's production than Harry is with his show every night in the week all the year round. It is this ever-present geniality, this ever-present energy, and this ever-present watchfulness on the part of Harry - for the men and women in his employ on the one hand, and for the servicing up of his entertainment in the best possible way on the other - that endears him at once to performers, and has likewise earned him the goodwill of the public by always ensuring them an excellently-run and excellently-presented show (18).

In later years a number of publications would indicate the level of esteem accorded Clay, with several positioning him and another of the local vaudeville managers, J. C. Bain, at the top of the list of those responsible for helping to generate and sustain Australian variety entertainment. In highlighting their past efforts a Theatre scribe in 1916 wrote, for example, "the Australian artist has never had in a small way two better friends than Harry Clay and Jimmy Bain" (Jan. 1916, 35). And to a large degree, it was Clay's geniality his energy and his determination during these undoubtedly difficult early years which saw him achieve his status within the industry and the broader community. Throughout the remainder of his years these traits would ensure his unquestioned reputation and in turn help to sustain him through the troughs that frequently accompanied the vaudeville industry's fight for survival in both the war and post-war periods; a battle which would be fought against the rapidly emerging film industry, discriminative tax laws, the 1919 flu epidemic, increasingly tougher theatre and public halls legislation, and the ever-demanding need to find newer and more entertaining acts.

Reviews published during the first six months of 1910 indicate that the company was by that time doing tremendous business. Barely six months after the Theatre noted that "'the House Full' sign is always in requisition" (Jan. 1910, 23), Clay closed down his Sydney circuit, claiming that competition by picture shows was to blame. "Yes," said Mr Harry Clay, speaking to the Theatre [in May 1910], "for the present I have entirely given up my city and suburban vaudeville circuit. The picture shows, particularly in the

³² The only primary source reference found in relation to Mark Time's engagement with Clay's is in an Australian Variety notice for a forthcoming bill at the Bridge Theatre in August 1917 (29 Aug. 1917, n. pag). This would seemingly support the 1951 article's claim that the English comic's stay with Clay was a one night affair.

suburbs have proved too much for me.... I am leaving Sydney to join my Queensland show at Rockhampton.... [and] I shall be returning... about the end of August, when I may give the city and suburbs another try in the matter of vaudeville" (June 1910, 23). It would not be the last time that Clay called a halt to his city and suburban vaudeville operations during the next few years due to competition from the invading film industry although these hiatus periods, which generally coincided with his Queensland tours, are believed to have occurred no more than three or four times.

It can be seen, then, that in terms of survival during this period - when he was obviously attempting a great deal of entrepreneurial exploration in addition to some initial expansion of his vaudeville operations - that the continued success of the Queensland tours was intrinsic to his ability to maintain a strong financial basis. In support of this claim comes a quote from Clay in 1911, in which he speaks enthusiastically of Queensland as a great state. "Towns are springing up that you would never have dreamt of playing in a few years ago. Today you can take a good-sized company into them, with most payable results" (Theatre Oct. 1911, 29).

On his return to Sydney in August 1910, Clay did indeed re-establish his city and suburban circuit, opening at the Standard Theatre before a packed audience. In the same issue it is noted that Clay had returned once again to the stage, after several years concentrating on management. It is likely, then, that his enforced "lay-off" from the constant pressure of managing his Sydney circuit, encouraged him to get back into performing. And indeed, if the favourable responses he got to his own stage performances in Rockhampton are any indication it is of little surprise that he re-established himself as a performer. One Morning Bulletin reviewer write for example: "Mr Clay, who had a most enthusiastic welcome, made his appearance on the stage in Rockhampton after an absence of some years. His voice - a fine tenor - was heard to much advantage and the number was one of the most attractive items of the evening" (1 July 1910, 4). Reviews, too, over the remainder of the tour indicate that his status among Queensland critics and audiences, who "vociferously recalled" him on many occasions, had not diminished. After this tour Clay continued to take to the stage on a regular basis right up until 1921 when, as previously mentioned, a stroke forced him into semi-retirement.

The following year, 1911, saw Harry Clay return to Queensland where he toured with his Comedy Company as both manager and performer. It is likely that he was forced to take on the managerial duties because of Jimmy Boyle's unavailability. Boyle is known to have gone back to England after the 1910 tour, which left Clay in the position of not having anyone with the same experience, and just as importantly, someone he could trust to the same extent as the long-serving manager. The fact that Clay included himself in the tour, in addition to there being no records found regarding his Sydney operations for the greater portion of 1911, seems to suggest that as with the previous year he temporarily shut down the Sydney circuit. It is during this period, too, that Clay is believed to have been contemplating his entrepreneurial future, with vaudeville already beginning to face serious threats to its viability from forces within and outside the entertainment

industry. These concerns were recorded as part of a Theatre interview published in October of that year. Stating that he had no time for picture shows in the suburbs due to the extremely low admission price (three pence and one penny) compared to his more than reasonably priced shows (one shilling and six pence), Clay expressed a tirade of ill feeling towards the industry and the problems faced in relation to the bias held against his suburban-based company:

The penny charge is supposed to apply to children, but they would pass you in for a penny even if you were as big as Dick Barker, the Queensland giant, and could hand them down a star. People come into the city from the suburbs to go to the theatre. It does not matter what they pay. They will go to that theatre - even if the programme is not half as good as the one you might be giving them right at their very door. The idea they get into their heads is that your company must necessarily be an inferior sort of thing because it is appearing in the suburbs. Consequently, this fact also tells against the vaudeville-man in catering for suburbanites (29).

According to Clay, in the same Theatre article, he had no intention of presenting vaudeville in the suburbs over the summer months, "even if I had the best performers on earth" (29). The exact reasoning here is unclear, but in the context of an interview targetting his struggle with the picture shows, it seems that the holiday period was a contributing factor in lower audience numbers at his shows. For whatever reason, it can be assumed that this situation may well have lasted up until September of 1912, as he is known to have once again toured Queensland with his company. And with the tours starting in mid-to-late February and ending around August it is unlikely even at this stage of his company's development that he would have handed over the reins of his Sydney operations to anyone else. While the Sydney circuit seems to have closed down, the same cannot be said of his interstate interests, however. In this regard it is known that towards the end of 1911 he re-established his association with Stanley McKay, using his connections and experience to send the young theatre director's Bo-Peep pantomime company through Queensland under the Clay banner. [*For further details see Chapter Four/Appendix B*]

It can be assumed, then, that around this same period Clay began putting together a plan to base his operations out of one venue in Sydney in order to combat the ever-increasing difficulties that were being faced by vaudeville operators in the metropolitan areas of Australia. The decision to concentrate his efforts in Queensland during the period immediately prior to that plan being put into effect indicates the financial value he placed on the venture in comparison to the risks involved in running the city circuit. There is of course no evidence to suggest that he considered giving up the Sydney operations. Rather, it would have been the benefits in having a base from which to run the company's various operations (and which also provided unlimited access) in addition to the prestige that came with owning a theatre that influenced Clay's decision to build his Newtown theatre. Furthermore, this venture was initially seen as presenting him with the opportunity to run at least two companies, each alternating between a week around the suburbs and a week at the headquarters (although this practice would eventually be suspended for several years). There is

little doubt that with his well-established reputation in the rapidly expanding suburb of Newtown the choice of location was ready made. Newtown and the suburbs immediately south and west had during the previous decade or so begun to feel the brunt of a movement away from the inner city and Glebe areas by the gradually expanding middle-class society. It created, in effect, an ideal support base for Clay's new operation, with the new population including many families with working-class values but with incomes that allowed for more leisure activities.

Sometime in 1912 a partnership is believed to have been formed between Clay, Harold T. Morgan (solicitor, local alderman and past and future Newtown Mayor) and another local businessman A.R. Abbott, resulting in the establishment of the Bridge Theatre Company Pty Ltd. [*For details on Morgan and Abbott, see Appendix E*] By October of that year they had made an application to the Newtown Council for permission to erect a theatre at the corner of Bedford and Denison Streets, directly opposite the Newtown Railway Station and next door to the old Town Hall building (Sydney City Council Archives - 1912 Minutes, page 462). Its location was perfectly positioned, being as it was (and still is) in the heart of the suburb's central business area. The following month the application, which the council initially referred to the Works' Committee, was granted permission to proceed subject to the Government Architect's approval (468).

Prior to the purchase of the property by the newly formed company, the site had been a blacksmith's shop ("Audiences" n. pag.), and included a small strip of land on the opposite side of Alton Lane, across from the soon to be built theatre (see Plate 20). This would be used, in later years, as a two story extension to the theatre, housing an electrical plant, dressing rooms, and scenic artist's workshop amongst other requirements. The second story of this building (which no longer exists) housed the dressing rooms, and was accessed by a small bridge over the laneway, the location for this - a couple of metres from the corner of the theatre's north west wall in Alton Lane - can still be seen in the different brickwork which closed the original entrance to the bridge. A copy of the New South Wales Certificate of Title, dated the 29th of May 1924 (Vol 3596, Folio 220 - Application No 24761) shows that the land was originally granted to one Thomas Rowley in 1803, and identified as being Lot 19 of the North Kingston estate in the Municipality of Newtown, Parish of Petersham and County of Cumberland. It was part of a 240 acre block owned by Rowley.

Work on the Newtown Bridge Theatre is thought to have begun around the end of February/beginning of March 1913 as Clay is reported to have left his Queensland touring party and returned to Sydney at the end of February to "oversee the construction" (Theatre Feb. 1913, 19). Although details regarding the building's contractors and architects of the theatre and its design are presently unknown, it has been established that its seating capacity was 1,500 people (Australian Variety 12 Aug. 1920, 4), and that it contained an upstairs and downstairs foyer, box-office and manager's office. The auditorium consisted of a dress circle and stalls, as well as projection booth for the screening of films. Originally, the dress circle

simply ran from one side of the theatre to the other in a straight line. Later reports mentioning reconstruction of the theatre, however, indicate that the dress circle was eventually lowered and reshaped around the sides, and that several boxes were installed as well.

Clay kept his Sydney circuit operating during the theatre's construction, although it is believed that his association with the Standard Theatre must have terminated prior to November 1913. An exact date is difficult to establish, mainly because of the lack of details concerning the company between 1910 and 1913. Ross Thorne points out, however, that the Standard had been taken over by Mr and Mrs Hugh Buckler sometime in 1913, and that they altered and redecorated it, renaming the venue the Little Theatre. Thorne records that in a Souvenir of the Little Theatre "mention is made of the bedraggled, tawdry interior with antiquated stage, a place for the holding of boxing matches and a 'two-up' school" (Thorne 199), suggesting that perhaps some considerable period of time had elapsed since Clay last used the theatre.

The Bridge Theatre was opened on 19 July 1913, three days after Clay's Bridge Theatre Company received license from the NSW Fire Commissioners enabling it to operate the venue under the Theatre and Public Halls Act (Fire Commissioners/Theatres and Public Halls 1928-1958 file - NSW Government Archives, Location No; 20/15013 dated 21 July 1930, page 2). A letter submitted by A.R. Abbott (Bridge Theatre Secretary) to the Newtown Council for consideration during its June meeting, indicates that the theatre had been near completion by that time. In the request, Abbott asks that the disused vehicle entrances around the theatre be turned up, and the footpaths be repaired. He also points to the need to tar pave Alton Lane (Newtown Council Minutes/Sydney Council Archives). The day after the opening of the Bridge Theatre the Sydney *Sun* published a small article on Clay and his suburban operations:

Mr. Harry Clay opened his new Bridge Theatre at Newtown last night to a capacity house... On his salary list are over 75 performers, while over 100 theatre attendants, mechanics, electricians, stage hands etc draw salaries every week. Mr Clay has two vaudeville companies at present playing in Sydney, also a dramatic company and a vaudeville company on tour in Queensland. The Coliseum, North Sydney, plays three nights' vaudeville and three nights' drama, as does the National, Balmain. The Bridge Theatre is devoted to vaudeville. Mr Clay hopes to eventually control seven suburban theatres (20 July 1913, 15).

By early November Australian Variety was reporting that "Harry Clay's Newtown home is playing to capacity business nightly" (5 Nov. 1913, 6). The following month the same magazine publicised Clay's termination of his suburban circuit (apart from a No 2 company at the Coronation Theatre, Leichhardt, every Saturday night), a decision he claimed was made so that he could "devote his whole attention to the Bridge Theatre, Newtown, which is his stronghold" (3 Dec. 1913, 6).

It is believed, too, that 1913 also heralded the first engagement with Clay's by Roy Rene, considered one of Australia's greatest comedians. Rene had previously moved to Sydney from Melbourne to undertake an engagement as stable boy for J.C. Williamson's racing drama The Whip. The comic recalls in his

autobiography that he stayed on in Sydney because he believed "there was more scope for [him] there," and "started off by trying to see Harry Clay," whom he remembered as being "a most marvellous man" (42).

I went on trying to see Mr Clay for months, but no matter how often I went to his office, they would never let me in. One Friday night, sitting in my little bed-sitting room in Phillip Street, I just about decided I'd never see him, and I spent the next Saturday morning around all day, and by 5 o'clock that afternoon I was standing at the corner of Pitt and Market Streets feeling a pretty dismal sort of failure, when who should walk by but Harry Clay. He took a look at me and then came up and said "What are you doing tonight, Jewboy?" I said "Nothing, sir."

"Go and get your props and come out to Balmain to work tonight, one of the turns is off sick."

I didn't stop to ask how much money I'd be getting or what I'd be doing or anything else, I just bolted back to my room, picked up my props, shoved them in my port and raced off to the theatre..... I must have been about nineteen then, and this felt like a big chance. When Mr Clay arrived, he said to me, "Go on to the corner and do your number." Well I went on and did my biggest number, a thing called "That's all she lets me do," which was all about a man and his girl and how he never even gets kissed goodnight. I was very thin in those days, and I wore black tights and very big boots and funny make-up with stripes like a zebra down my back. I'd already taught myself eccentric dancing, and I went on that night and I really was a riot. Even so, I got the surprise of my life when I was packing up after the performance, when Mr Clay said "You'll stop for the rest of the week."

He gave me £6 at the end of that week, and I certainly thought I was made of money. I can tell you it was pretty good money, too, most of the performers only got £4. Mr Clay must have liked me quite a lot, because after that I was with him for many years playing his circuits (42-43).

Although the exact date of Rene's initial engagement has not been established, it is known that he appeared on the second leg of Clay's 1913 Queensland tour and was billed as a comedian (a`la Julien Rose³³) and an impersonator (Gympie Times 17 July 1913, 2). The fact that he was considered good enough to go on tour would seem to indicate that some period had elapsed between his tryout (believed to have been sometime around April) and his July appearance in Queensland. Despite his claim that he worked for Clay's for "many years" it seems that Roy Rene's initial engagement³⁴ would last only until sometime into 1914. In terms of its importance to the development of his early career, however, the engagement can be considered immeasurable. As the 1951 Perth News article notes: "no actor was worth his salt unless he had run the gauntlet of Harry Clay's standards and the hypercritical audiences that followed vaudeville" ("Audiences" n. pag.).

Essentially, Rene, like countless other Clay's performers before and after him, found himself having to prove his ability not only to the boss, but to the boss's audiences. Renowned for being tough on those who failed to make the grade, as several anecdotes included in both this and the following chapter will testify, the patrons of Harry Clay's establishments could in themselves make or break a performer. While Rene's act and his

³³ Julian Rose - Hebrew Comedian, renowned for his rendition of "Lavinski at the Wedding."

³⁴ Rene and his second wife Sadie Gale were engaged by Clay's for the Sydney circuit in 1929, and are believed to have also toured Queensland for the company that year. For further information see Chapter Five.

Denison St

Weeks Lane

Alton Lane

Bedford St

APPN 24761

45

46

9 1/2 PER

21

20

19

17 1/2 PER

Scale 1" = 20 feet to one inch

From NSW Certificate of Title Registration Book: Vol 5545 Fol 155 - 1946
(Courtesy of Bill Ellis, Enmore Theatre NSW)

Given the opportunity to work with one of the best professional organisations in Australia so early in his career, the experience would have been a major factor in Rene's ability to attract the attention of the Fullers' organisation (during a brief stint with J.C. Bain) soon after the conclusion of his contract with Clay. In this regard Harry Clay's determined interest in supporting and directing his artists would have been very much a part of the young comic's development throughout his engagement. And in this respect, Clay's influence on Rene's career along with the likes of George Sorlie, George Wallace, and Arthur Tauchert, can be again seen to have played a significant part in the development of an Australian popular entertainment industry.

The success of Clay's new venture at Newtown seems to have continued unabated during 1914, despite the fact that, as Australian Variety points out in April, the "amusement slump is now general" (22 Apr. 1914, 5). Indeed, the reviews in that magazine throughout the year regularly note the support he was given by the local audiences. The January 10th edition of Australian Variety, for example, indicates that "a great majority of vaudeville followers [in Newtown] seldom leave the environment of their residences to seek amusement elsewhere. This speaks volumes for the quality of programmes submitted by Mr Clay..." (n.pag). With complete changes of program every week, and consistently good bills on offer, it seems that the theatre regularly turned patrons away due to being booked out (Australian Variety 15 July 1914, n. pag.). The "Audiences Were Tough When Harry Clay Ran Vaudeville" article records that "sixpenny seats were always booked out days in advance" (n. pag.). Thus in an effort to alleviate demands on the theatre's box-office, the management arranged to have Mick Simmons Ltd at 311 King Street, Newtown take bookings during business hours.

1914 began with a season of drama at the Newtown Bridge Theatre, starting off with Uncle Tom's Cabin (6th January), followed by Slaves of London the week after. The first production, which included the esteemed Australian actor Harry Leston³⁵ and also had Harry and Essie Clay (as well as Bert Corrie) in singing roles. Harry Clay continued to perform on a regular basis throughout the year, entertaining the audiences with his tenor songs, as an interlocutor, and in comic/patter or duet turns with others such as Ted Tutty and Maurice Chenoweth. Other performers with established reputations to be engaged by Clay during this period include, besides Roy Rene, Billy Maloney, Lulu Eugene, Joe Lashwood, Joe Charles and Emile Dani, The Phillip Sisters, Desmond and Jansen, Will Gilbert, Pagden and Stanley, Jack "Porky" Kearns, Eileen Fleury, Bert Corrie, Joe Rox, Louie Duggan, Peter Brooks, Max Martin, Sadie Gale and her mother Myra, Billy Cass, English comic Denis Carney, and two people destined to be among Australia's biggest stars during the vaudeville era, Amy Rochelle and Arthur ("the Sentimental Bloke") Tauchert. [*For information regarding Rochelle and Tauchert, as well as several other artists mentioned, see Appendix F*]. All of these artists, however, were to establish considerable reputations and careers both with Clay's and

³⁵ Harry Leston - mentioned in the previous chapter as being one of the most consistently employed, and popular actor/reciters during the late 1800s and early 1900s. He was also a well-known teacher of drama and elocution. Essie Clay is known to have been a student of both Leston and Roland Watts-Phillips (daughter of Watts-Phillips, English playwright and writer), who appeared in many of George Rignold's productions.

with various organisations throughout Australia. Several also made successful transitions to other entertainment mediums such as theatre management, pantomime, dramatic theatre, and later film and radio.



Plate 22

Amy Rochelle

(Australian Variety 14 Apr. 1915, n. pag)

In November of 1914, arguably the most popular vaudeville sketch of the period, the dramatic piece "Humanity," was presented for the first time in Australia at the Bridge Theatre (Theatre Jan. 1915, 46). Owned and produced by Englishman John Lawson, and first presented in England³⁶ during 1900, the sketch's successful season on Clay time³⁷ echoed the similar success it had, and would continue to achieve around the world. Its popularity was such that the Fullers would bring it back to the Australian variety stage in 1920 in a much larger production. The initial Clay's production, which garnered high praise from reviewers, continued the tradition of presenting what many considered to be the most realistic fight scene ever put on for the variety theatre. In terms of production values, too, it was considered by the Australian Variety reviewer as being "the finest that has ever been seen on any stage in New South Wales, everything being finished in detail, and not the smallest item being overlooked" (11 Nov. 1914, 6). Lawson, who owned

³⁶ Lawson first presented "Humanity" at the Gaiety Theatre, Brighton, England in 1900. Its popularity saw it play 16 consecutive weeks at the Oxford Theatre, London; 18 weeks at the Paragon (East London); and 36 weeks in South London. "Humanity" was made into a film (screened in Australia by Wests Pictures ca. 1916) and sold on gramophone records - 30,000 copies being sold between 1916 and 1918, "a majority of them going to the trenches" records Lawson in Australian Variety ("John Lawson Discourses," n. pag). The sketch considered the relationship between a Jew and a Christian, and the latter's betrayal of their friendship through lust and greed. The sketch finishes in fight, in which "an appalling amount of crockery is broken." (Theatre Jan. 1915, 46).

³⁷ The reference to "time" as in Clay time or Fuller time, for example, was a common part of journalistic and public discourse during the vaudeville era, and refers to each organisation's "show-time" – i.e. the current venues, artists and programmes etc.

the rights to the thirty minute sketch, had formed two companies to tour the show around the world, with the No 2 troupe, starring Edward Rainer, being the company engaged by Clay's. In this respect, then, it can be seen that Harry Clay was quite capable of successfully seeking out, and securing, quality overseas attractions before the larger variety organisations (in later years this also included the purchasing of revues) and not being simply a receptacle for second hand artists and shows, as the company has generally been regarded.

The success of the "Humanity" season in part can be attributed to the prevailing emotional upheaval within the Australian population, and perhaps the general desire to make sense of man's inhumanity, created no doubt by the advent of the Great War some six months earlier. Its success also acted as a precursor, however, to Clay's decision to continue the presentation of serious drama at the Bridge Theatre in early 1915. Seemingly despondent over the lack of fresh ideas and professionalism of many Australian vaudeville performers, he acted on an earlier threat to cut them off from work as a means of teaching them a lesson in entertainment responsibility. Australian Variety, in supporting the same conclusion that audiences were "tired of seeing the same old faces - week after week - for years," published Clay's opinion on the matter in its January 6th, 1915 issue:

There's a fine crimson lot of cerise individuals around. They come begging for work, when most of them ought to be out on the railway deviation works with a ruddy pick in their hands. The blanky cows very seldom learn a new song or business, and then wonder why they don't get cardinal work. One of these days I'll cut all these adjectives out, and put in popular drama then I'll be rid of these flaming pests (8).

Consequently Clay's Dramatic Company presented in January, Never Despair, Slaves of London (again with Harry Leston in the cast), and then Convict Martyr. Many of the actors involved were seen in all three productions and, according to reviews they were both well attended and well received. The prevailing thought within the local community seems to have been, however, that the Bridge Theatre was a vaudeville establishment, and soon after, Harry Clay brought back the variety side of his entertainment.

While Clay's patience with the attitude of many of his artists was being tested it did not stop him, however, from holding the company's second annual picnic in February of 1915. Held at Killarney, the social gathering was put on specifically for the artists and managers of the company - along with his two major business partners A.R. Abbott and H.T. Morgan. Sporting events were held - with prizes donated by Clay, competing vaudeville manager Jacky Landow and A.R. Abbot amongst others - while dancing and other entertainments were also provided. These picnics, which were often publicised in the entertainment magazines, were held consistently throughout the lifetime of the company, providing an extra-curricular bonding activity for the company, which prided itself as a family-style organisation. As discussed in the first chapter it is surprising to note that although the picnics regularly attracted large numbers of Clay's people and their families, and were organised by a committee from the company, no mention of Kate or Essie Clay attending or helping to arrange these events has yet been found. This factor, along with Kate Clay's non-

existent profile in her husband's life and the vacating of the Glebe residence in 1914 by Harry (at least), has contributed to some speculation regarding their relationship.

Although business seems to have been steady, by May of 1915 Clay was again blaming competition from the film exhibitors and the problems prevailing throughout the industry for the smaller audience numbers. In a Theatre interview he noted that Saturday night always saw a packed house and that "if we could only get two nights like it a week we would be satisfied. But except on Saturday night there is nothing doing" (June 1915, 47). He subsequently began screening films during the week, opening on Saturday nights with vaudeville. Some two months later, however, he returned to "regular vaudeville," a move which Australian Variety declared to be "good news for the profession generally" (21 July 1915, 8).

Another aspect to the year was the decision by Clay's, for a short time at least, to adapt the first part minstrel circle to something more modern. The Theatre, in reporting the disappearance of "nigger business" almost to the point of extinction, noted in relation to the new first part at the Bridge Theatre (which opened on the 24th of April 1915 under the title of Fun on Board the S.S. Newtown):

First [the minstrel format] was cut out at the National, then at the Tivoli, and next at the Princess - when that house passed from Jimmy Bain to the Fullers. Even Harry Clay at the Newtown Bridge Theatre before closing down on vaudeville had substituted something of a topical character for the nigger business - the men being in navel uniforms, and the girls in blue jackets, white skirts, and navy caps. As the admiral of the fleet - for that in his company is what he appeared as - Harry himself would have been the hit of the Belgian Day procession if he could only have been lassoed into it (June 1915, 48).

This tends to indicate, then, that Clay had been presenting minstrelsy as part of his city circuit entertainment from the start, despite the fact that it was no longer considered viable by the larger organisations.³⁸ While the minstrel show's style and content had indeed lost much of their widespread appeal by the 1911-14 period, reviews and comments published up until the early 1920s suggest that blackface entertainment continued to find favour with Clay's audiences up until at least that period. In May 1921, however, Maurice Chenoweth (Clay's Princess Theatre manager) is reported to have finally brought down the curtain on it in response to the popularity of the revue format. There are several references to minstrelsy in reviews published during the 1920s which indicate, nonetheless, that it continued to be presented by the smaller variety management stables who played the suburbs and regional circuits (and once or twice by Clay's), but were generally promoted as "old-time revival" shows, or a one-off attraction.

Perhaps the most significance aspect of 1915, however, was Harry Clay's association with Arthur Morley, then known as a comic and singer, but who soon became one of Clay's leading revue writers and producers. In this regard it can be seen that there was more committed activity towards the area of revue production than had previously been the case. While Clay's reputation is almost exclusively identified with vaudeville

³⁸ The minstrel/vaudeville format continued to be presented on the Queensland tours until 1916, after which the company began presenting vaudeville and revue.

entertainment today, it should be noted that his organisation was recognised at the time as being as much a revusical company as it was a minstrel/vaudeville one. The revusicals gradually began to take over the place of the minstrel first part, and by 1916/17 had become very much the focus of advertising. This becomes clear when one considers that Clay's touring companies (apart from the No 1 company) were generally known as or referred to by the revue they were touring (for example the Oh that Hat company). Thus while the minstrel formula would, as previously mentioned, invariably reappear for periods of time, the revues were seen as essential to the company's continued success right through until its demise at the end of 1929.



Plate 23

Arthur Tauchert (from *The Sentimental Bloke*) 1919
(Australian Variety 21 Mar. 1919, 1)

Arthur Morley is believed to have been the first of the professional revue writers and producers to work for Harry Clay, and he would be followed by many others - notably, George Edwards, Art Slavin, Charles "Ike" Delavale, George Wallace, Elton Black, George Pagden, George Drew, Ted Stanley, Nat Hanley, Bert Desmond and Lester Brown. These writer/actor/producers worked very much under the conditions of present day television sitcom writers; churning out new scripts at an amazingly quick rate in order to supply the huge demand. As each show was completed, including a musical score (and perhaps choreography), the writers would invariably be required to present the scripts for rehearsal, after which they would then send them out on the circuit - and more often than not taking on the responsibility of directing, in addition to

any acting roles demanded of them.³⁹ The need for new material was such that by the height of Harry Clay's NSW circuit organisation, 1917/18, a period when he had no less than five companies running simultaneously, he was forced to look overseas for productions. In 1917, for example, he utilised the services of Lester Brown and Arthur Morley, both of whom were reported to have purchased revues from America for Clay. Morley is believed to have bought the rights to four revues around September 1917 (Australian Variety 8 Aug. 1917, n. pag.), while Brown is said to have purchased at least 3 revues from America for production in late 1917 (Australian Variety 3 Oct. 1917, n. pag.).

First part revues began appearing regularly on the Clay circuit from at least October of 1915, one of the earlier productions being The Carnival. In this revue the Bridge Theatre stage was reportedly transformed into a continental cafe, and the performers dressed as pierrots (Australian Variety Oct. 1915, n. pag.). By the end of the month Arthur Morley's Royal Musical Comedy Company was presenting shows such as On the Sands and Not a Word to the Wife with great success. During the Christmas holiday period, however, revues took a back seat to the pantomime - with Stanley McKay's company putting on a number of shows around the Clay circuit over the December/January period, including Old Mother Hubbard. Reviews of this production in particular report that McKay's version had proved immensely popular with the Clay audiences, further entrenching his reputation for presenting quality popular theatre productions, as well as providing Clay's with the financial boost it needed in the wake of the difficulties experienced during the previous twelve months.

The following chapter will examine the operations of Harry Clay's company during the period of time in which it achieved both its pinnacle of success, and conversely, underwent its eventual demise. That the company was able to survive the severity of the conditions facing vaudeville during the 1920s was undoubtedly one of Harry Clay's more significant accomplishments. And will shortly be argued, it was an achievement which to a large extent had its foundation in the business decisions and operations undertaken by Clay during the 1916-18 phase of its operations. In contrast to the previous couple of years this was to be a period of great expansion and reorganisation by Harry Clay and his company. During this time he opened up a south-western NSW circuit, established the country's leading vaudeville booking agency, expanded his suburban circuit to unprecedented levels, leased and ran several significant theatres in Sydney's city precinct, and ended his Queensland regional tours after eighteen years of unbroken service. It will become clear that these activities effectively provided his company with the stability and resources it required in order to continue operating throughout the later years - a period which saw very few survive in vaudeville.

³⁹ Morley and several contemporary commentators have indicated on a number of occasions that these revues were churned out on a weekly basis. Australian Variety, for example, records Morley's response to suggestions regarding his workload with Clay's: "Oh yes," said deep-voiced Arthur, "very little to do have I? Only to keep Mr Clay's companies supplied with a new musical production every week, very often play a part in the said production, work in a trio, play in a farce, do a single, make out a mile or so of publicity matter, and conduct rehearsals" (18 July 1917, n. pag.). Another report indicating Morley's output notes that "he is a real hard worker, and it is no easy matter putting on a new revue each week at the Princess Theatre" (Australian Variety 22 Feb. 1918, n. pag.).

CLAY'S BRIDGE THEATRE, NEWTOWN

Saturday Next : : October 23rd

MR. HARRY CLAY has much pleasure in announcing that he
has made arrangements to present, on the above date,

The Royal Musical Comedy Co.

Comprising a collection of the Finest Australian
---- Artistes in the Southern Hemisphere ----

The Opening Production will be Mr. ARTHUR MORLEY'S Original One-Act Musical Comedy :

"ON THE SANDS"

A Veritable Feast of Melody. Magnificent Costumes. Charming
Dances. A Beauteous Bevy of Femininity. Australia's Cleverest
Comedians. Pretty Stage Settings. And

THE HARMONIOUS FOUR

The Finest Male Quartette in Australia.

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS:—Flo and her Friends arrive. On the Sands. Private, Strictly
Private. Clarence the Sport. Somebody's taken my Togs. I wonder who were there before?
Police! The Rich Uncle from Fiji. Everybody Happy.

A FEW PRESS EXTRACTS :—"The finest entertainment ever given in Ballarat. The house was a record one and the season
assured of success."—Ballarat Star. "Mr. Arthur Morley's clever combination present all that is best in bright musical
comedy. The Harmonious Four sang magnificently."—Geelong Times. "It did not matter whether the full company was
'On the Sands,' The fine male quartette was trilling harmonious ditties. There is not a dead 'un in the bunch."—Mildura.

In addition to the above Great Attraction, there will also be presented

A MAGNIFICENT AND HIGH-CLASS VAUDEVILLE OLIO

To which Old Favourites and New and Up-to-the-Minute Speciality Acts will contribute. Finally

There will be NO ADVANCE IN PRICES.

BUT BOOK—AND BOOK EARLY.

Plate 23

(Australian Variety 20 Oct. 1915 n. pag.)

CHAPTER FOUR

"THE FRIEND OF AUSTRALIAN PERFORMERS: HARRY CLAY AND HIS BRIDGE THEATRE COMPANY, 1916 – 1929"

At the funeral, which took place at the South Head Cemetery last Thursday, a large and representative gathering was present. In fact, it can safely be said that no more fitting tribute to a deceased manager has ever been noted in this country, for old-timers, and those of today gathered round the graveside to pay their last respects to one who had done so much to promote the well-being of the Australian performer.

("Late" 4)

In his career as a manager, Mr Clay was a staunch friend of Australian artists, and won a high name in the profession for his generosity.

("Death" 17)

As the previous chapter intimated, the three year period of expansion from 1916 to 1918 would effectively serve as a foundation for the company's operations during the next decade, as well as firmly entrenching Harry Clay's reputation as one of Australia's leading theatrical managers and entrepreneurs. The struggle to return to those halcyon days in later years would occasionally succeed, but ultimately the battle against the film industry, in tandem with the ever-widening gap in the public's attitude towards the old entertainment forms and the developing new ones, meant that that goal would never be fully realised. Added to this were the damages inflicted upon the company in the course (and aftermath) of the 1919 Spanish Flu epidemic; the stroke and eventual death of Harry Clay; the expanding number of small-time (and often fly-by-night) film/vaudeville operators who entered the industry more fervently as transportation conditions and logistical options improved; and of course, the economic and social conditions which occurred in the lead-up to the Great Depression.

In its examination of Harry Clay's organisation this thesis has been able to correlate and present the historical, social, economic and industrial factors which aided in bringing about the demise of vaudeville, and in particular Clay's company. In light of this it has become quite apparent that the tenacity with which he and his managers fought to overcome these difficulties was inherent in the attitudes, traditions and the tough origins of Australian minstrelsy. Indeed, for a company like Clay's, which had prided itself on supporting local artists, the simple fact of the matter is that it had no other course of action left open. The thousands of performers still attempting to make a living from variety or other areas of the theatre industry found their options ever-decreasing. While in terms of non-theatrical employments or career avenues, few long-time professionals had other training or experiences, thus effectively leaving them with little in the way of future prospects. Admittedly there were other Australian vaudeville companies, such as Bert Howard and Frank

Reis still operating in the late 1920s and beyond. But by then none could even attempt to emulate the level of success and the achievements of Harry Clay, and in reality could do little more than be part of the gradual dismantling of the once invincible practice of vaudeville.

1916 certainly began in an auspicious manner, with reports of audiences continuing to fill the Bridge Theatre for Stanley McKay's popular Christmas/holiday pantomimes - Bo-Peep being one of the most popular attractions. During the year, too, it becomes noticeable that many of the artists appearing with Clay's by this time had, or were rapidly achieving, established reputations with the theatre-going public and the industry at large. The war was to some extent assisting in this by giving many Australian (or Australian-based) entertainers more opportunities for creating a name for themselves. For while there is no doubt that a drain on the numbers of available artists had occurred - with many performers of military age joining the war effort - the influx of imported stars had slowed to a point where even the Tivoli circuit was being forced to employ greater numbers of local acts than at any stage in its past. In terms of expansion, however, Harry Clay's organisation began to follow a number of paths - the opening up of new venues and circuits; and not surprisingly, a move into the area of theatrical booking agencies.

With the company continuing to do very good business throughout the first half of the year, both with the Sydney circuit and the Queensland tour, Harry Clay made two announcements in August through the trade magazines concerning his future plans. The first would be the opening up of a new circuit which would include several suburban and NSW country theatres. In addition, it was his firm intention to expand his interest in vaudeville acts by taking on the role of booking agent for both his and other organisations. To this end he engaged the services of James H. White, who had been managing the International Vaudeville Agency out of the offices of the Australian Variety magazine. White was also acting as a journalist for the magazine, under the bi-line of "Whitie," having previously worked in the same capacity for the Hawklet, a periodical published out of Melbourne. "Whitie's" role was to be the manager in charge of booking artists, in addition to fulfilling several other roles within Clay's company. Before the month was through, "Harry Clay's Theatrical Enterprises and Theatrical Booking Office" had begun a concerted advertising campaign to attract both performers and those in need of variety entertainers "practically [guaranteeing] Permanent Engagements to those worth their salt" ("Mr Vaudeville Man" n. pag.).

Located on the second floor of 4 Young's Chambers at the corner of Pitt and Park Streets (by then the new Poverty Point), Clay's Agency, as it was more commonly referred to, began supplying single acts or even entire companies to other organisations. These included Tup Smith's weekly Newcastle circuit, the Rushcutters Bay Stadium, Jacki Landow's Sydney circuit, and even the Tivoli Theatre ("Clay's Budget" Australian Variety 6 Sept. and 20 Sept. 1916).⁴⁰ In September, just over a month after it started operating, the agency began to advertise its ability to supply entertainments for "Homes, Garden Fetes, and Smoke-

⁴⁰ See Appendix B for further information concerning Clay's Agency and affiliated organisations.

nights," as well as professional organisations. No commission charges were made, except for those engagements procured outside Clay's own vaudeville circuit. [see plate 27 for sample advertisements]⁴¹ By 1917 White and Clay were also looking to fill positions for long engagements in the East with Harmston's Circus.

In September 1916 Clay's is believed to have begun its long association with the Coliseum Theatre at North Sydney. Located at 269 Miller Street (corner of Ridge Street), the theatre would for many years be referred to as either Clay's Theatre or Clay's Coliseum.⁴² The precise date in which the company began operating from the theatre is unknown, and indeed several secondary sources indicate conflicting information regarding this. Ailsa McPherson (18) and Margaret Park (20) mention the years 1918 and 1920 respectively, while Clive Lucas and Partners in their conservation report for the Independent Theatre claim that in 1913 "Harry Clay's Vaudeville Enterprises, a low comedy vaudeville based at Bridge Theatre, Newtown, advertised their suburban circuit to include the North Sydney Coliseum Theatre" (Conservation Plan 35). Although it is possible that Clay may have taken up the lease as early as 1913, research for this thesis has so far failed to find any primary source material which supports any such association with the Coliseum prior to 1916. Indeed, the first mention of the Coliseum being amongst the Clay stable of theatres is to be found in Australian Variety (23 August 1916), which states that:

Harry Clay's New Musical Comedy Company will begin a three nights season at the Coliseum, North Sydney, on Saturday, September 2nd. It is Mr Clay's intention to play at this house on the Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday in each week.... Under the new arrangements, from four to five different companies will be kept going, each beginning at North Sydney and finishing at Clay's Bridge Theatre, Newtown, five or six weeks later ("Clay's Budget" n. pag.).

Further to this is a report in the following issue which notes that the No 1 Company would open that week "at the Coliseum, North Sydney, for a three nights season" (n. pag.). While the wording of these announcements certainly doesn't validate the September 1916 date as being the first time the company played there, the lack of evidence indicating that it was part of the company's circuit between 1913 and 1916 suggests otherwise. In support of this is Clay's own statement in April 1916 that "the only theatre [I am] connected with at present is the Bridge Theatre, Newtown" (Australian Variety 26 Apr. 1916, 1). This is considered to have been the situation from around December 1913, that being the month in which he announced the closure of his entire suburban circuit, except for Newtown and Saturday nights at the

⁴¹ Interestingly, the Theatre records in 1909 that Sydney had three theatrical agencies in 1904. In 1909, however, it had none (Aug. 1909, 20).

⁴² The Coliseum Theatre - now the Independent Theatre, was originally built as two separate theatre buildings. One seated over 2,200 people and operated as the Coliseum Picture Theatre. The smaller theatre, designed for more intimate "live" entertainment, and particularly vaudeville, seated some 778 people. The site was initially a tram depot (opened 1886), and turned into a place of entertainment by North Sydney Coliseum Ltd who purchased the property in 1911. J.C. Bain ran his vaudeville shows from the theatre for about two years, starting in 1911. Two of the best known artists engaged by Bain during this period were Gladys Moncrieff and Clyde Cook.

Coronation Theatre in Leichhardt (Australian Variety 3 Dec. 1913, n. pag.).⁴³ Furthermore, at no point during the period December 1913 and April 1916 is there known to have been any mention of the suburban circuit operating (including North Sydney) within any of the trade magazines during that period.⁴⁴



Plate 25
Arthur Morley
(Australian Variety 26 July 1916, n. pag)



Plate 26
James H. White
(Australian Variety 9 Feb. 1916, n. pag)

The move to the Coliseum, with its greater seating capacity and more prestigious environs, saw the company continue to enjoy its popularity in the area, despite some local North Shore snobbery that Clay's was "third rate" (McPherson 5). Indeed, during the following year Clay added the neighbouring suburb of Mosman to the circuit, with Manly in 1918 and Chatswood in 1920 further strengthening his association with the northern suburbs. Amusing insights into the social aspects of Harry Clay's vaudeville operations, particularly at Newtown and North Sydney, are presented within the two "Byways of History" articles, and Roy Rene's autobiography:

⁴³ See a par identified as "Harry Clay's Touring Bunch."

⁴⁴ It is possible that if Lucas and Partners were unaware of the company's long association with the St. Leonard's Masonic Hall they may well have associated Clay's pre-December 1913 advertising of North Sydney - which makes no mention of the venue - with the Coliseum.

Should the audience react unfavourably - usually by roaring their disgust until the whole building shook - the [artist] was given his pay and sent on his way. The cast was always prepared for practically anything when the Coliseum showed on Saturday nights. Brick-carters from Gore Hill turned up in their hundreds in button-up boots, pearl buttons on their coats, slouch hats with the sides turned up and violently colourful scarves round their necks. From the first act it was on, with the brickies bellowing and shouting their disapproval or delight. Harry Clay's chief "chucka-out," Snowy Sturgeon, an ex-boxer would go into action. One loquacious brickie would follow another out the side exit until the more noisy element had been removed and the voices from the stage could be heard ("Audiences" n. pag.).

In Rene's autobiography Mo's Memoir's, Max Harris (who collaborated with Rene on the book) interviews Bill Sadler (Clay's former manager) about the function of the theatre doorman. Sadler's insight provides a glimpse of what it was like to attend Clay's early shows:

"I suppose... [its] fairly restful..." Sadler smiles at the ignorance of the younger generation, as if to say "You just don't know nothing." "In the old days," he says, "say we had a show at New Town [sic]. The mob would roar its head off. Bottles would be rolling down the steps. And enthusiastic games of dice and cards would be in progress at the back of the theatre, and there would be scarcely a night when our strong-arm squad would not have to quell a fracas. Many are the teeth I have seen spattered round the floor in the old days" (162-63).

Perhaps the most important aspect of Harry Clay's expansion during 1916, however, was his decision to extend the Sydney circuit into several NSW regions, whereby he would run four distinct companies along what was to be one complete circuit (but broken down into three distinct legs, these being the suburban circuit and Southern and Western lines). A company would be supervised on each leg by a different manager, with the Southern line being initially managed by Len Buderick,⁴⁵ while the Western line was controlled by Wally Edwards. The companies were known as No 1 Musical Comedy Co., No. 2 Vaudeville Co., No. 3 Revue Co., and No. 4 Vaudeville Co. As the Theatre of December 1917 indicates:

Some of these places - country and suburbs - receive only one visit per week [while others get two or three nights]... The idea is to keep the four companies [later five and six] always on the move. In this way the country towns that are played only one night in the week receive in the course of the month a visit by the whole four companies. It's the same with the suburbs (47).

The towns initially opened up for Harry Clay's circuit in 1916 were:

Goulburn ⁴⁶ (Majestic Theatre)	Murrumburrah
Wagga Wagga ⁴⁷ (Strand Theatre)	Young
Cowra	Grenfell
Bathurst	Albury
Portland	Lithgow (Oddfellows Hall)
Katoomba	Yass
Cootamundra	

(Australian Variety 27 Sept. 1916, n. pag. and Theatre Nov. 1916, 49)

⁴⁵ Len Buderick - actor/conversationalist who toured Queensland with Walter Bentley for Clay's in 1909. He managed the Southern line until sometime in 1917, leaving to take on an engagement with Kate Howard's Dramatic Co.

⁴⁶ Goulburn - initially playing 3 night seasons. The venue was also known as Clay's Majestic Theatre ca. 1918.

⁴⁷ Wagga Wagga - opened on the 26th September 1916, at the Strand Theatre, playing Tuesday nights.

Mr. Vaudeville Man, do You want Work ?

I wish to intimate to Artistes all over Australasia that I am personally controlling four Vaudeville Circuits, thus practically guaranteeing Permanent Engagements to those worth their salt. All acts given an opportunity to make good. My motto—"Fair and Square Deal." No more old stuff. Bring along something new and I will talk business. My thirty years' experience proves that my word is my bond. Call on my representative, J. H. WHITE ("Whitie") and get into line at once. Managers interviewed daily between 12 and 1.

HARRY CLAY, Young's Chambers, 2nd Floor, Cr. Pitt & Park Sts., SYDNEY

(Australian Variety 16 Aug. 1916, n. pag.)

Important to the Artist.

I wish to intimate to Artistes all over Australasia that I am personally controlling four Vaudeville Circuits, thus practically guaranteeing permanent engagements to those worth their salt. All acts given an opportunity to make good. My motto: "Fair and Square Deal." My thirty years' reputation proves that my word is my bond. Call on my representative, J. H. White ("Whitie") and get into line at once.

No commission is charged artistes appearing under Mr. Clay's management. Special arrangements will be made with artistes booked elsewhere. To Vaudeville and Picture-show Managers: If in need of good talent, see us. At Homes, Garden Fetes, and Smoke Nights specially catered for.

Harry Clay's Theatrical Enterprises, Theatrical Booking Offices,

4 Young's Chambers (Second Floor), Pitt & Park Street, Sydney.

(Australian Variety 7 Feb. 1917, n. pag.)

HARRY CLAY'S CIRCUIT
FEATURING
MUSICAL COMEDY and VAUDEVILLE.

Playing complete change of programme each week at Goulburn, Yass, Harden, Murrumburrah, Wagga, Young, Grenfell, Cowra, Bathurst, Lithgow, Katoomba, Parramatta, Ashfield, Mascot, North Shore, Mosman, and
BRIDGE THEATRE, NEWTOWN.

Wanted. First-class performers suitable for Musical Comedy, Revue and Vaudeville communicate at once stating lowest terms and full particulars to J. H. WHITE ("Whitie")

HARRY CLAY'S VAUDEVILLE ENTERPRISES
AND THEATRICAL BOOKING OFFICES,
4 Young's Chambers Pitt and Park Streets, Sydney.

(Australian Variety 16 May 1917, n. pag.)

A result of this expansion, too, was the obvious increase in employment prospects for local artists. It has been recorded in the November 1916 issue of the Theatre, for example, that Clay's employed over 100 artists a week (49), in addition to managers, office staff and theatre workers, including costume makers,⁴⁸ scenic artists, stage hands, musicians, electricians, operators etc.

The move into the south-western areas of NSW also caused some considerable concern to smaller regional managers, who saw him as a large Sydney entrepreneur cutting in on their territory. In a letter to the Theatre, for instance, Mary MacFarlane notes:

In nearly every instance a travelling showman named Harry Clay is now playing in opposition [to Mr Tinker's circuit],⁴⁹ and with newer methods of advertising. Mr Tinker is feeling the difference keenly (Dec. 1916, 24-25).

As with his Queensland tours the promotion for these touring shows consisted of newspaper advertising and day bills. Whether or not Clay continued to use children for dodger drops in mailboxes is unknown, although with regular weekly visits to each centre this may not have been considered necessary. Charles Norman, in an interview for this thesis, remembers that the promotional aspects of touring shows were a complex logistical exercise, requiring individual programmes for each town and drop cloth advertising by local businesses as a means of acquiring additional income. In this regard it seems likely that the organisation of touring shows would have been a considerable operation.

With vaudeville companies consisting of around eight to twelve acts, programmes and advertising material needed to be arranged well in advance - requiring each artist to notify management of what songs, skits etc they intended performing. In addition, it was imperative that all material was either new or at least had not been performed in recent weeks, so that audiences were never presented with repetition. As Clay's had between five to six companies touring simultaneously around this period it would have been no easy operation to maintain, and required the management to keep well informed of their artists' performances.

Another aspect not unrelated to this logistical organisation is the matter of contracts. Apparently, prior to around October of 1916, Clay had not found it necessary to sign artists to his company for engagement periods. According to Australian Variety, however, Clay had begun "binding artists under contract, a move that [had] become necessary owing to the great demands on some artists' services" (1 Nov. 1916, n. pag.). This new requirement, whereby performers were to be contracted, rather employed via the previous handshake deal, indicates the change in social and institutional practice brought about by both the war and the expansion of Clay's operations. As less overseas artists became available the competition for engaging class Australian-based acts increased between the various organisations, creating somewhat of a hitherto

⁴⁸ It should be pointed out that artists were responsible for the costumes used in their own acts. The company would generally supply garments for revues, farces and special events, however.

⁴⁹ Tinker, of Junee, had a circuit comprising Murrumburrah, Leeton, Ganmain, Coolamon, Narrandera, Yanco, Junee and Cootamundra ca. 1915-17 (Theatre Dec. 1916, 24-25).

unknown local market whereby popular artists could play off managers against each other to increase their salaries. With the rapid expansion of both Clay's and the Fullers, the drain on small time companies also increased. The competition for Clay's, then, was not so much from the Fuller brothers, but from the smaller organisations and "would-be" entrepreneurs (often performers themselves) who would attempt to snare at least one recognised act away from companies like Clay's to headline their lesser quality programmes.

Two other matters relating to the expansion of Clay's during this period and which have been unearthed during the course of the research for this thesis (but for which there is little in the way of additional background material) concern Harry Clay's intention to move into Victoria, and the building of a theatre in the Sydney suburb of Rozelle. The Victorian proposal, first announced in the November 8, 1916 issue of Australian Variety (n. pag.) as being on the cards sometime during the next year, seemingly never came to fruition, as no mention of a Victorian circuit has yet been found. The reasons for the failure by Clay's to expand into the southern state are also unknown, however it does seem that a number of regional-based managers within Victoria expressed their concern at this apparent invasion by a NSW based entrepreneur. It is likely then, that Clay was not prepared to risk his company's capital on a venture that was not likely to receive support from within the Victorian vaudeville infrastructure, an argument that seems likely in view of the tight control he held over virtually all aspects of his fiscal business.

The other perplexing aspect of Clay's expansion plans concerns his apparent purchase of land in Rozelle (in close proximity to the Post Office) on which he reportedly planned to build another theatre without delay (Australian Variety 4 Oct. 1916, n. pag.). In the same magazine the following month it was announced that "Harry Clay's new theatre, which is being built at Balmain [Rozelle?], will be a most up-to-date house, furnished with all the latest appointments" (8 Nov. 1916, n. pag.). Again, no further information has been found with regard to this theatre ever actually being part of Clay's enterprises, and hence there is some reason to suspect that this too was deemed an unwise venture by the entrepreneur.

Following on from a particularly successful holiday period, which included the pantomime attraction The Court of Father Christmas, Clay's operations in NSW during 1917 saw him maintain the same momentum as in the previous year. To a great extent this would be the result of both the quality and popularity of the revues, and Clay's increasing ability to attract top quality local acts, in addition to a number of overseas artists. As both Charles Norman [*see Appendix H*] and Australian Variety (23 May 1917, n. pag.) note, it was commonly accepted that any international artists who finished their contracts with the Tivoli or Fuller organisations and wished to extend their stay in the country were "assured of from eight weeks to six months work [at Clay's], six shows a week, and at a good salary." [*See also plate 28*] This was a highly popular arrangement, allowing these artists the benefit of complementing their stay - and delaying the long trip home - with additional income. But while Clay's were naturally unable to compete with the remuneration accorded

these artists by the A circuit organisations, their financial deals were sufficiently competitive to attract a great deal of interest.

HOYT'S PICTURES New Metro Features

Registered at G.P.O. Sydney, for transmission by post as a newspaper.

Australian Variety AND SHOW WORLD

AUSTRALIAN OFFICE OF THE BILLBOARD (MILWAUKEE) U.S.A.

Vol. XVI., 188 SYDNEY, MAY 23rd 1917. Price Threepence.

Will Rollow Elsie Bates Arthur Morley Bessie Phillips Ted Stanley

Lulu Eugene Amy Rochelle Harry Clay

Eileen Phillips Bert Dudley Evelyn Dudley James Caldwell

HARRY CLAY'S Popular No. 1 Revue Coy

Who have broken all box office records for the firm.

Plate 28

(Australian Variety and Show World 23 May 1917, 1)
(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)

During 1917, too, Harry Clay re-established a professional connection with George Sorlie, later to become perhaps one of the most widely travelled and popular showmen in the country, and who is known to have worked for the company around the time Harry Clay began laying the foundations of his Sydney circuit. Sorlie's engagement with Clay's, with intermittent appearances for other managements (including Harry Sadler and the Fullers), was to last until sometime in 1919. He was an enormously popular attraction for Clay's as the following anecdote from a Princess Theatre performance demonstrates:

"If you can stand it I'll sing it!" It was the retort of George Sorlie to a crowded house that clamoured for 'Four and Nine' after he had already responded to no less than three recalls. "We're used to it," interposed someone in the audience. Said Mr Sorlie, "You ought to be." After a pause he added, "If there's anybody here who hasn't heard me sing it will he please stand up?" For a joke someone did, because so long has Mr Sorlie been giving 'Four and Nine' that it's inconceivable there is among Harry Clay's thousands of Sydney patrons one who hasn't heard George's rendering of it - again and again. To the person standing up Mr Sorlie remarked amidst laughter, "There's a medal for you in the office." The song has assuredly never had in Australia the equal of Mr S. as a singer of it. Hence his sensational success in the clever tuneful humorous lines (Theatre Feb. 1919, 27).

Sorlie's experience was also noted by reviewers as being of critical importance towards the success of Clay's shows, not only in the general nature of his professionalism and his role as a main attraction, but also in his ability to help Clay direct and assist the less experienced performers (Theatre June 1919, 25).

Oddfellows' Hall. Oddfellows' Hall.

SPECIAL AND INTERESTING ANNOUNCEMENT

Commencing with TO-MORROW (SATURDAY) NIGHT.

WALLY EDWARDS the well-known representative, will present

HARRY CLAY'S HARRY

BIG SPECIAL MUSICAL COMEDY AND VAUDEVILLE, AND EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT IN FUTURE. To-morrow night's Programme will be headed by the WELL-DRESSED REVUE:—

“Killing Them Off.” “Killing Them Off.”

THERE HAS ALSO BEEN THE SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT OF

SHAND AND SHAND. (Lady and Gent. Comedy Acrobats.) TED. TUTTY, (Everybody's Comedian.) MAX MARTIN, PAGDEN AND STANLEY,	AMY ROCHELLE. (Farewell appearance of this Brilliant Soprano.) THE TWO GILBERTS. (The Human Hairpin and his Partner.) MAISIE POSNER, (The Midget Comedienne.) AND A HOST OF OTHERS.
---	---

PRICES AS USUAL.—SEATS MAY BE BOOKED AT THE CONFECTIONER'S SHOP.

PICTURE MATINEE AT 3 O'CLOCK.—USUAL PRICES. PICTURES ONLY.

Star Drama, “THE CRIMSON DOVE.”

A World Special. Excitement and sensation.

Don't miss seeing—Locked in the burning church—The fighting minister and the little child—Outside, the drunken mob demand the clergyman's death. THE KEYSTONE COMEDY—it will make a cat laugh—“THE BOOK-WORM TURNS.”

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.—We will be showing on MONDAY and TUESDAY, the Holiday Nights. Watch for Big Picture Programmes.

Plate 29

Advertisement for Clay's at Oddfellows' Hall, Lithgow, 1917
 (Lithgow Mercury 28 Dec. 1917, 5)

In terms of competition, however, 1917 also saw the Fuller Brothers head into Clay's territory, when on the 2nd of May they opened their own theatre, the Majestic, virtually across the other side of the street from the Harry Clay's Newtown headquarters. In preparation for this battle for audiences Clay carried out some £5,000 worth of renovations to the Bridge Theatre over a two month period. The major changes entailed lowering and extending the dress circle around the sides of the auditorium, the addition of three boxes overlooking the stage, enlarging the dressing rooms, and providing running water to each (Australian Variety 16 May 1917 n. pag.). The "Byways of History" article "Audiences Were Tough When Harry Clay Ran Vaudeville" recounts the Fullers' invasion of Newtown:

With Clay's ruling the roost at Newtown, the Fuller circuit decided to enter into competition. Fullers took over the Majestic [later to become the Elizabethan] and the battle for audiences began. The night the Fullers opened found Clay's almost empty. Harry Clay told [Maurice] Chenoweth to do something about it. On the Monday a full-page ad appeared in the Newtown Daily. All it said was "From Clay you came, to Clay you will return." The next day, Fullers took over the Newtown Daily. Its ad read: "No matter how full you are, we're always Fuller"⁵⁰ (n. pag.).

HARRY CLAY'S CIRCUIT

MUSICAL COMEDY and VAUDEVILLE.

Playing complete change of programme each week at Goulburn, Yass, Haiden, Murrumburrah, Wagga, Young, Grenfell, Cowra, Bathurst, Lithgow, Katoomba, Parramatta, Ashfield, Mascot, North Shore, Mosman, and

BRIDGE THEATRE, NEWTOWN.

Overseas Artistes

Coming to this country "on spec" can, if their Act is acceptable, receive from 8 weeks to 6 months work on the Circuit

REMEMBER SIX PERFORMANCES ONLY EACH WEEK

HARRY CLAY'S VAUDEVILLE ENTERPRISES
AND THEATRICAL BOOKING OFFICES,

4 Young's Chambers Pitt and Park Streets, Sydney.

Plate 30

(Australian Variety 23 May 1917, n. pag.)

⁵⁰ Interestingly, a brief par in the May 30th edition of Australian Variety presents an almost exact replication of this anecdote. "Harry Clay comedian to Fuller ditto: 'I see you're coming out to show at Newtown.' Fullers' comedian: 'Yes, and no matter how full Clay is, we'll always be Fuller.' Clay's comedian: 'That may be so, but we all come from Clay and to Clay we must return' (5). Whether or not the anecdote published in 1951 (regarding the Newtown Daily advertisements) actually occurred is unknown, as no copy of the paper is currently known to exist. On the other hand, the Australian Variety piece may well have been a version which was constructed from the Newtown newspaper.

By October of 1917 Harry Clay's Sydney circuit had opened up a number of new suburban venues, while the South-Western circuit had also by now added Holbrook and Harden's show dates, along with Wyalong. Of the new openings it would be Eden Gardens at Manly which would attract quite a deal of attention. Opened on the 29th of September (Australian Variety 19 Sept. 1917, 3) after extensive work was carried out on the venue - including the installation of Clay's own electric light plant, along with a new roof and floor - the company began playing there two nights per week, and later taking on six nights per week over the summer period. The location proved to be a highly successful one for Clay's and continued to be so for several years to come. In the same way both the newly requisitioned Bondi Junction and Surry Hills ventures were able to capture sizable inner city and eastern suburbs markets. With regard to the Crown Theatre (Surry Hills), however, this venture was considered somewhat risky, as Australian Variety indicated when it recorded that "vaudeville [had] been tried there before. But by putting on strong bills, Clay anticipate[s] a big house every Wednesday night" (Australian Variety 13 June 1917, n. pag.).

In early 1918 the company's expansion continued even further, following on from reportedly excellent business during the holiday period (Australian Variety 25 Jan. 1918 n. pag.), opening at Andy Kerr's Boomerang Theatre, Coogee (sometime in January) along with another venue at Burwood. At North Sydney the Coliseum was continuing to operate three nights a week, these being Monday, Tuesday and Saturday, while on the country circuit the South-Western Line had added Daceyville and Junee to its itinerary. Clay's Agency, arguably the premier vaudeville booking agency in Australia, was handling acts for Les James' South Coast circuit, Jacki Landow's Sydney circuit (providing entire companies) and Ike Beck in the Hunter regions, amongst other organisations. And in March, around the same time that the company began playing Saturday matinees at the Bridge Theatre for the first time, Clay took on a six month lease of the Princess Theatre, opening there immediately after the closure of Harry Sadler's season on the 23rd.

The Princess Theatre would be one of the most significant venues operated by Clay's, and apart from the Bridge Theatre, the one with which he is perhaps most widely associated. The decision to open at this prime city location - being situated at Railway Square - also brought about the temporary closure of his South-Western line. With right-hand man Wally Edwards away on Queensland managerial duties until September, Clay perhaps recognised the difficulties in spreading his organisation too sparsely, particularly in light of the importance of concentrating his efforts in the new venture. With the minstrel first-part back on the programme and a second part revue, the Princess trial was ultimately an enormous success. So much so that in August he took on a further twelve month lease. As Australian Variety notes: "the genial Harry has established himself well in this popular house, and will firmly entrench himself behind programmes of wonderful versatility and ability" (2 Aug. 1918, 3).



Plate 31

Clay's Princess Theatre, ca. early 1920s
(Courtesy of Jon Fabian)

During the same month Clay began sending companies north to Newcastle where they played King's Hall for week long engagements (Australian Variety 16 Aug. 1918, 11). With shows also being run in Katoomba and Lithgow at this stage the success of these country ventures led him to reopen in October the South-Western line. These additions to his suburban and country operations, along with the interim departure from the company in August the previous year by Arthur Morley, forced Clay's revue writer/producers to take on increasingly more demanding workloads in this area. To a large degree the efforts of George Edwards, George Pagden, Art Slavin, and even Maurice Chenoweth were to become a huge factor in the success of Clay's during this period. Indeed the year culminated in the highly successful attraction Toyland, written and produced by Edwards, which opened at the Bridge Theatre in December to high praise from the critics.

In 1919 Clay's Sydney suburban circuit was to include Bankstown and Leichhardt, along with Ashfield, Surry Hills, Manly, Bondi Junction, Parramatta, North Sydney, and of course the Bridge and Princess theatres. In January, Dick Montague's Pierrots appeared for a season at the Britannia Theatre, Leichhardt, under Clay's direction, while Toyland continued to do good business around the circuit until the end of the summer period. Of course the worldwide 1919 Spanish Flu epidemic also created considerable hardship for the many theatrical industries. In Australia, for example, most theatres and places of public amusement were forced to close for a considerable period of time in an effort to try and stop the spread of the virus. As a consequence of this Clay cancelled that year's Queensland tour, a decision to a large degree supplemented by

the increasing difficulty he had had in maintaining the circuit's viability over the past few years. It was a decision which also meant that the company would not return there for another nine years, when English male impersonator Nellie Kolle toured as the headline act in a troupe again managed by Wally Edwards. In addition, Clay was also forced to close down the South-western circuit, which it is also believed saw the end of his involvement in those regional areas. Upon the reopening of the theatres in May, he and his managers concentrated on re-establishing the city and suburban circuit, which found itself becoming increasingly involved with the Harry Sadler and Andy Kerr operations at the Gaiety Theatre in Oxford Street across from the city's Hyde Park.



Plate 32
Maurice Chenoweth
(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)



Plate 33
Harold T. Morgan
From the Newtown Diamond Jubilee Souvenir
(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)

This house, not to be confused with the old Gaiety Theatre in Castlereagh Street, was being run jointly by Sadler and Kerr ("the Coogee Bunyip"), who took on the lease in late 1918. While Harry Clay's association with the Gaiety did not become official until October 1919 (Australian Variety 30 Oct. 1919, "Gaiety Theatre" column), it seems, according to the research undertaken for this thesis that his involvement had been in an unofficial capacity since the early part of the year. In this sense it can be shown that he was acting

very much in the role of booking agent, supplying most of the acts from his own circuit.⁵¹ While the reasons for this are not actually known, it seems likely that Harry Sadler's ability to run his theatre had been greatly impeded by a court case, and the resulting controversy and scandal, won against him by Phyllis Faye. This widely reported libel suit would have undoubtedly made his position in the industry quite untenable, and is likely to have been a contributing factor (along with reported financial difficulties) in Sadler's suicide in July 1919. His partner Kerr - the erstwhile bookie renowned for giving the longest odds on record, owner of the Boomerang Theatre Coogee, and editor of Australian Variety - was relatively inexperienced in the hands-on management of vaudeville, and hence the reason for Harry Clay's involvement one would assume. [*For details regarding Sadler and Kerr see Appendix E*]

The Gaiety was to become another of Sydney's theatres closely identified with Harry Clay, it being known to have remained under the company's management until around 1929 (although the exact termination date is unknown). The two city venues and the Bridge Theatre continued to maintain their popularity, as did the suburban circuit, drawing considerable audiences each week.⁵² To a large extent this was due both to their established locations - such as with North Sydney, Ashfield and Parramatta (which had been Clay strongholds from the start) - as well as through Clay's ability to relocate parts of the circuit to new areas, thereby capturing fresh markets. As one means of sustaining the company's popularity Clay engaged the highly popular Taylor-Coleman Pantomime Company for the Christmas/summer holiday period, easily the most successful of their productions being The Golden Butterfly.

With the South-Western line closed and business in the Sydney metropolitan area doing well, 1920 saw Clay once again looking around for other areas to open. Indeed, by July Australian Variety noted:

In these times of H.C.L. [Harry Clay Ltd] it is wonderful the capacity business that is done by the majority of the theatres. Clay's patrons are increasing weekly; that can be accounted by the fact that his prices are exactly the same as those charged in pre-war days (1 July 1920, 21).

⁵¹ The Gaiety Theatre, situated at the Hyde Park corner of Oxford Street had been known originally as the Emu Theatre, and is believed to have been one of Sydney's oldest picture houses. Prior to this it had been Mark Foy's old drapery premises and after having been remodelled at an unknown date it became the Empire Picture Theatre under the management by William Bevan. The theatre changed hands a number of times before it eventually came under the direction of William Howe, at which time its name was changed to the Emu. By January 1917, under the proprietorship of A. Gough, it had become a vaudeville house - with booking arrangements in the hands of Will Robey (Will E. Grow). By March 1918, however, the theatre's name was again changed, this time to the Trudamite, and had reverted to a picture house. In December 1918, it was once again converted into a vaudeville and revue house under Sadler's management (Theatre Dec. 1918, 32; and Australian Variety 3 Jan. 1917, n. pag; and 15 Mar. 1918, n. pag.).

⁵² One of the Gaiety's most popular attractions was the amateur trial night, generally held on Fridays. These had previously been a Bridge Theatre event (from 1917), but were transferred to the Gaiety sometime around 1920. They returned to the Newtown house in 1923. To a large degree these events held the same appeal as the "Red Faces" segment does in the popular Hey Hey! It's Saturday program run on the Nine Network in Australia. The "Byways of History" article "Sometimes His Shows Were a Riot" recalls that "some of the best attended shows at the Gaiety and Bridge were the amateur nights on Fridays. Some of the talent was horrible. The audiences had full rein to voice their displeasure. It was bedlam at times. Any performer who passed the ordeal was ready for a run on Clay's circuit" (n. pag).

Reviews of Clay's theatres during the course of the year continually make reference to the large attendances at his programmes, the following being but just example of this:

As we predicted last week, Maurice Chenoweth's Company knocked all previous box office receipts bandy at the popular little Oxford Street house this week. Manager Taylor says the place was only half big enough to accommodate the patrons who wanted to witness the show on Saturday night. He says that he didn't turn away dozens but hundreds, and it nearly made him weep to turn away the good cash (Australian Variety 12 Nov. 1920, 18).

It seems, too, that there was considerable competition between each of Clay's company managers and their respective performers, with this manifesting itself through contests to see who could outdo the others in regard to audience popularity and moreover, box office takings. [See Appendix I for further quotes regarding the popularity of Clay's shows during this and other periods of his career]



Plate 34

Andy Kerr

(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)



Plate 35

Harry Sadler

(Australian Variety, 3 Jan. 1919, 1)

To a very large extent, however, Clay's pricing policy can be seen as one of the most important factors in his ability to attract these audiences. It is also quite likely that he was hesitant to charge more in case of a backlash by his public. In particular it was the film showmen - men like William Szarka of the Enmore Theatre, just down the road from the Bridge Theatre, and Frank Reis, who had both been successfully running vaudeville and pictures for the same or lower admission prices who created the greatest threat to draw away Clay's audiences. Szarka and Reis represented somewhat of a new breed of entrepreneurial management as opposed to Clay's style, which in many ways could now be considered the "old school" of management.

HOYTS DE LUXE, George St. : : Sydney's Leading Cinema House



Conducted by
Andy Kerr and
Martin C. Brennan

No. 1019 Registered at the G.P.O. Sydney, for
transmission by Post as a Newspaper SYDNEY, DECEMBER 4, 1919 Printed & Published by Andy Kerr & Martin C. Brennan
at 224 and 230 Pitt Street, Sydney, New South Wales 3d

GAIETY THEATRE
OXFORD ST. HYDE PARK
Sole Direction ANDY KERR



**Clay's
Vaudeville**

Maurice Chenoweth, Keith Connolly, Pinky Waine,
George Wallace, Ida Merton, Gordon Lewis, Mercia
Morrison, Wal Rockly, Rene Dixon, Cass and Cass, The
Forsyths, Ireland and Bilton, Wee Jock McGregor.

BALLANTO, In a Sensational Balancing Act

PRICES: SIXPENCE TO 2s. A few Reserves at 3s.

Plate 36
(*Australian Variety* 4 Dec. 1919, 1)

In November Clay began operating a No 2 suburban circuit,⁵³ as well as returning to Wollongong after quite a few months absence. It has not yet been determined exactly when Clay's first began to run shows in Wollongong, however, it is known that he secured a good association with Boland's Theatre in that town. The company managers working for Clay during this year included James Caldwell, Ted Stanley, Billy Driscoll, and Reg. Greenwood; with the theatre managers including Maurice Chenoweth (Princess Theatre), and Percy Taylor, Jack Nicolson (picture manager) and Lou Courtney (spruiker) all at the Gaiety Theatre. Bill Sadler (brother of Harry Sadler) and Jimmy Boyle were looking after the North Sydney and Manly operations respectively, while Harry Clay (with help from Dick Heaney) continued to oversee the Bridge

⁵³ Interestingly, *Australian Variety* indicates that Clay had secured the Alhambra Theatre as part of his expansion plans. The reference further notes that "it is anticipated that all the preliminaries will have been concluded in a few days" (8 July 1920, n. pag.). However, this is the only mention of any association with the theatre found during the research undertaken for this dissertation.

Theatre's operations. In collaboration with these managers, Jimmy White continued to run the booking agency for Harry Clay.

1920 was also an especially important year for Clay's in terms of discovering new talent. George Wallace - destined to be known as one of the country's great comics, revue producers and an early film star - formed a partnership with Jack Patterson, which Katherine Brisbane notes had no equal in being "so well remembered purely from appearances there" (178). The team of "Dinks" (Patterson) and "Oncus" (Wallace), both of whom had been with Clay's since the previous year, would become the hugely popular acrobatic knockabout comedy act widely known as "The Two Drunks." Engaged for several years on Clay time they became easily its biggest ever drawcard until an unfortunate incident led to the bitter breakup of the partnership. Wallace continued on with the company as a revue company leader in his own right, a position for which he had trained under the Clay management, later moving onto the Fuller circuit, and eventually appearing in at least seven films in addition to his long and successful career in radio and on the stage. Patterson, too, would remain with Clay's for some time afterwards, teaming up with his wife (and longtime Clay's regular) Trixie Ireland, before touring overseas for a considerable period of time. On his return to Australia, he continued presenting his own revues, and occasionally teamed up with other comics.

During his early days with Harry Clay, Wallace often worked with his wife, Margarita, the April 1919 issue of the Theatre recording, for instance, that:

George Wallace is a comedian with a delightfully quiet style. He gets his laughs without any forcing. His wife helps him in the patter. They wind up by introducing their son [George Wallace Jr] a tiny mite, in some clever acrobatic poses (28).

By early 1920, however, he was creating a considerable reputation as a solo performer, being seen by one Australian Variety reviewer as "the finest comedian on the Clay circuit," and one who gets his encores freely (29 Apr. 1920, 3). In mid-May he and Patterson teamed up, and by the end of the month were already receiving impressive notices:

[Wallace] has doubled up with Dinks Patterson, and went a riot. As they have only been together a couple of weeks, we hate to think what they will give patrons in, say, a couple of months. No bigger laugh has ever appeared on the Clay time (27 May 1920, 8).

Some two months later the same magazine wrote of their Gaiety performance:

Dinks and Oncus was the great hit of the show. If you have had a bad day at the races, or you have the blinded pip, take my advice, go and see them, and a written guarantee goes that so soon as you pipe the "Models" you will forget all about your troubles. They are a scream from beginning to end, and stopped the show (22 July 1920, 21).

The partnership lasted a few years before the final acrimonious split, seemingly over an unfortunate practical joke while still on the Clay circuit. More than likely, however, and as Stuart Sayers' inclusion in the Australian Dictionary of Biography suggests, it was the final straw for Patterson, whose steadily diminishing

role in the partnership would have become untenable, particularly in light of Clay's advertising which had been promoting "Oncus and his Merry Company" (365). Charles Norman recounts the "scrimmage" which led to the split in his book When Vaudeville Was King. Apparently some unnamed joker behind the set pinched the posterior of Patterson's fiancée (Ireland) while she was in the middle of her performance, and furthermore just as she was about to reach her top note. It came out, writes Norman, as "a kind of bel-canto five o'clock knock off whistle," causing a great deal of amusement to the audience and considerable embarrassment to Miss Ireland. In the ensuing argument, Wallace tried to brush off the incident as a harmless back-stage joke, but Patterson took the incident and his partner's lack of propriety personally and as a result "one of the world's best comedy acts split up" (104).



Plate 37

George Sorlie ca.1915
(Australian Variety 10 Feb. 1915, 1)



Plate 38

George Wallace ca.1925
(Courtesy of the Fryer Library)

With business continuing its momentum in 1921, everything seems to have been running without any noticeable problems for Harry Clay. This is borne out by reports in the trade journals which record, for example the business being done leading up to the winter months:

So packed was this popular Oxford Street house last Saturday night that our representative found it difficult to obtain even a decent standing position. Manager Percy Taylor informed him that this state of affairs was general every weekend, and almost similar on week-nights thanks to a very diversified programme (Everyone's 6 July 1921, 15).

However, it is believed that sometime around the middle of the year Harry Clay fell victim to a stroke, which left him incapacitated for many months.⁵⁴ There has been no exact date found for this attack, with the first mention of anything to do with the state of his health occurring in the August 31 edition of Everyone's which reported:

We are pleased to announce the gradual recovery of Mr Harry Clay, head of the vaudeville circuit bearing his name. This gentleman had been in very poor shape up until a week ago, since then he has been gradually improving. A legion of friends will be pleased to see Mr Clay around again (18).

Although Clay was able to recover from the attack, its seriousness was such that some considerable time passed before he was able to return to work. It is said, too, that he never fully regained his vitality, and was forced to leave a great deal more of the business decisions to others than had ever been the case previously. Despite the lack of information as to who took over control of the company during Clay's long absence it would appear almost certain that Maurice Chenoweth (the Princess Theatre manager) would have been the senior manager, in consultation with Jimmy Boyle, Wally Edwards, Dick Heaney and perhaps Bill Sadler.

It was becoming apparent, however, that new policies and directions were becoming necessary in order for the company to continue operating under the social and industrial changes of the period. In November James H. White advised of a change in the affairs of the organisation, with a policy "requiring almost complete reconstruction of present methods:"

For many years Mr Clay has been looked upon as the real friend of the Australian vaudeville actor, and in return many of them have remained with him for several years, seldom changing their material, and in no way attempting to improve their professional standing. Others of course, ever alive to the necessity of diversity and versatility, have accomplished a good deal in the interests of their too-considerate chief. To those who, in the past have never attempted to get out of the rut, there will be a very drastic remedy introduced. At the present juncture we will say no more (Everyone's 9 Nov. 1921, 19).

The following month Everyone's pointed to the fact that the Clay circuit required more specialty acts noting that "although there are some very fair entertainers on the various bills, a majority of the acts offer either singing, dancing or talking turns" (28 Dec. 1921, n. pag.). These problems are noteworthy because they can be seen as having contributed to a large extent in the slowing down of public patronage for vaudeville houses in general, and not just Clay's. The fact that the company never entirely get back to the growth period of the 1916-18 years, however, can also be put down to Clay's stroke. In a sense it was his vast experience and his innate understanding of the business and audiences which could not be easily or quickly accessed by others in his organisation, despite the loyalty and effort they are said to have accorded the company in his absence.

⁵⁴ While the "Byways of History" article "Audiences Were Tough When Harry Clay Ran Vaudeville" recalls 1920 as being the year of Clay's stroke this could not have been the case, as there were numerous references to him throughout that year (including a number of performances), thereby indicating that he was in fine health.

An indication of the gradual down-turn of Harry Clay's vaudeville company - it could never be described as a collapse - can be seen in A.R. Abbot's letter to the Commissioner of Stamps, presented as part of Clay's Deceased Estate File. Abbot indicated that the company's shares were considered to be (in 1925) only 20/- instead of the 28/- indicated on the last Balance Sheet, and cited the company's losses for the past three years as being the reason for this. Those losses were as follows:

Year ending Nov. 30th 1922	£2360.17. 08
Year ending Nov. 30th 1923	£1834. 4. 01
Year ending Nov. 30th 1924	£2381. 4. 03

Abbott further stated that "when the directors decided to issue another 1,500 fully paid shares at 20/-, six of the seventeen shareholders did not make an application, although financial members of the community" (letter dated 9 June 1925). It would seem then, that from 1922 onwards, Clay's organisation began to feel the brunt of changes that would by the end of the decade see vaudeville in Australia become almost extinct. Further indication of vaudeville's change in fortune would become noticeable in early 1923, too, when the Theatre pointed out that in Sydney only Harry G. Musgrave (Tivoli) and Harry Clay were presenting vaudeville between them - with the Fullers and George Marlow offering other theatrical attractions for the time being (Jan. 1923, 20).

Another of the changes brought about during 1921 was the renaming of the booking agency from Harry Clay's Theatrical Agency to the Australasian Theatrical Bureau. James H. White remained the manager, and began promoting the business as being able to supply all kinds of theatrical gear, including scenery, travelling trunks, and baskets etc., as well as its being a booking agent. While it is not certain as to whether Clay remained involved with the agency, there has been no evidence to date which show that he had divested himself of a financial interest in it.

In January of 1922 Everyone's reported that "now on the semi-sick list for over six months, genial Harry Clay... is beginning to be something like his old self... and in all probability [will] be back at his post at the Princess Theatre within the next week or so" (11 Jan. 1922, 19). Some two months later the Theatre announced that Clay had taken over the Betts-Portus vaudeville contracts, along with the Ike Beck Newcastle / Hunter circuit. In the same report the magazine noted that Mr Clay has in permanent work not less than 150 performers, and "to this number may be added a full 100 in the way of staff and house employees" (Mar. 1922, 24).

Clay opened his account on the Ike Beck circuit in August 1922, with the weekly tour including Cessnock (opened on the 25th), Wallsend, West Wallsend, Lakemba, and Maitland.⁵⁵ Claiming that "competition is not affecting Harry Clay in the least, [with] good audiences continu[ing] to be the rule at his city houses,"

⁵⁵ See Charles Norman interview (Appendix H) for some insights into this circuit during the early to mid-1920s.

the Theatre also records that "Ye Olde Minstrels" have been revived for the first half of the programme at Newtown (Oct. 1922, 21). The return of the minstrel format, and its apparent success (it ran until the end of the year), further indicates that there was still a demand for this kind of entertainment with Clay's audiences. Of significance to the Newtown people in particular at this time was the suburb's Diamond Jubilee Celebration (held in December of that year), and for which the company is known to have played a major part, putting on a day of gala entertainment directed by Maurice Chenoweth. The photo of the Bridge Theatre and its companies (plate 38) was taken as part of the festivities. In chronicling the event for a souvenir booklet S.D. Smith wrote, "never before in the history of Newtown has such an entertainment in our streets been witnessed" (68).

Perhaps the most significant matter to have surfaced with regard to Harry Clay the following year (1923), was the action taken against him in court by one Frances Rose Phillips, professionally known as Fanny Levarto, who alleged that Clay owed her £106.4. in the way of short-wages paid her as a conductor-leader. This is the only known time that Clay had appeared in court, and in addition the only allegation of impropriety ever levelled against him. The Theatre reported the matter as follows:

After hearing evidence Judge Curlew said the award did not give any definition of a conductor-leader or a conductor. But it did define a leader. "It is quite clear," he proceeded, "that the duties of a conductor-leader are not those of a conductor or a leader according to the award. What a conductor-leader is I have not the faintest notion.... I am not satisfied that the evidence given as to the trade meaning of the word is satisfactory. Therefore I will enter a verdict for the defendant."

The Theatre magazine has no thought of casting any reflection on Miss Phillips. But –

This is the first instance that it has ever known Mr Clay to be sued for wages or on any other score. Nor in the hundreds of complaints that have been made to it by performers respecting managers has there ever been a word said to it even remotely reflecting on the honesty of Mr Clay's dealings with artists. Indeed, this is a wonderful tribute - a unique tribute - when it is reflected that Mr Clay has been in the business a lifetime, and that in the course of his career he must have employed performers by the thousand. And –

Appropriately may it here be added that it was through Mr Clay that many performers, today starring in Australia and elsewhere, got the start and encouragement that largely helped to make them what they subsequently became (Mar. 1923, 27).

Despite the verdict in his favour the court case may well have added to Clay's health problems. Seen sometime during May by a Theatre scribe, he was reportedly "still far from being his old accustomed self" (June 1923, 27), and in the July edition it was noted that he "looked a very ill man... on his way to the Princess Theatre" (July 1923, 17). There is no record of Clay's address in Sand's for 1923, suggesting that he was recuperating with either family or friends.⁵⁶ The "Byways of History" article "Audiences Were Tough When Harry Clay Ran Vaudeville" records an anecdote from around this time:

⁵⁶ Sand's does, however, show that a Catherine Clay was residing at 6 Soudan Street, Paddington during 1923. It is yet to be confirmed yet whether this was Harry Clay's wife.

It was hard, with his tremendous vitality, to stay in bed. He gave his coloured vocabulary full play. In desperation he got up and went to the theatre. To one of the cast he said, "You know, I think it's time I got off this earth." The man was startled. "Why Mr Clay?" "Because" - and Harry emitted a stream of well-chosen adjectives - "when I walked past the newsboy outside, I heard him say, "There goes that old so-and-so Harry Clay." "Now I don't mind being called a so-and-so, but I'm damned if I like that 'old' business'" (n. pag.)

It seems, too, that certain aspects of the company's operations were being affected by Clay's ill health. In April Ike Beck is recorded as having taken back his Hunter circuit, with advertisements announcing his return being found in the Maitland Daily Mercury during that month. By June the suburban circuit had been reduced, with only one company operating instead of the previous year's two. And in November, Maurice Chenoweth was acknowledged as looking after the programmes at Harry Clay's three Sydney theatres - the Princess, Gaiety and Newtown Bridge Theatre while Bill Sadler had taken over the house manager duties at the Newtown headquarters. This again suggests that the company was undergoing a severe contraction in its operational capabilities.

In terms of attracting audiences, however, the company was still able to boast some the best Australian performers of the period. During the 1922-23 period and even up until 1925 or so, such names as Vaude and Verne (arguably the greatest patter team this country has produced), comedian Leonard Nelson, Charles "Ike" Delavale, George Drew, Maude Courtney and Mr C, Reg. Thornton, Nellie Kolle, Sadie Gale, Clara Keating, the ever-reliable Ted Tutty, Dinks Patterson, and George Wallace continued to serve up their specialties for Clay's in addition to engagements with the Fullers and Tivoli organisations. In this regard the company was operating successfully, if on a somewhat smaller scale, with the city venues maintaining good to excellent business throughout the period, while the suburban circuit also maintained its popular appeal. This is confirmed by a Theatre report on "Clay's Theatres" which notes:

Excellent business was done everywhere during the holiday season. Many thousands who are unable to visit the heart of the city for their entertainment have reason to be thankful to him [Clay] for the opportunity of enjoying - the whole year round - a well-conducted, diversified show right at their very doors (Jan. 1923, 20).

Harry Clay's health began to deteriorate markedly as 1924 progressed, the result being that Jimmy Boyle (assisted by Bill Sadler) took over responsibility for most of his duties at Newtown, thus allowing Clay to concentrate his energies on the Princess and Gaiety operations with his (by now) second in command, Maurice Chenoweth (Theatre June 1924, 21). However, sometime during the second half of the year Clay apparently moved into a small flat in Watson's Bay, and from that point onwards "artists and fans at the theatres never saw him again" ("Audiences" n. pag.). In November longtime manager and friend Jimmy Boyle died suddenly, a shock which no doubt took a further toll on Clay's health. Only a few months later, near midnight on the 17th of February 1925, and with a few close friends around him, Harry Clay died, leaving behind not only his wife and child, but a legacy of involvement and achievement in Australian popular theatre matched by few others.

HARRY CLAY and his CONTINGENT of LAUGHTER MAKERS

NEWTOWN'S PIONEER OF AMUSEMENTS—AND STILL AS POPULAR AS EVER

Featuring
VAUDEVILLE
at its
BEST

COME
LAUGH
AWAY
YOUR
SORROWS

Complete
Change
of
Artists
Weekly



The Greatest &
Cheapest Show
in the Southern
Hemisphere

SAVE
HOURS
OF
WORRY—
SMILE

Complete
Change
of
Program
Weekly

A Night to Remember and Recommendation is a Night at—

CLAY'S BRIDGE THEATRE Popular Prices 6d. to 2/- (PLUS TAX)

Newtown Jubilee—Clay and Xmas Cheer Day, December 13th. Big Novelties —Be in the Crowd

Plate 39

From the Newtown Diamond Jubilee Souvenir: 1862-1922

S.D. Smith compiler

(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)

Those gathered at his funeral numbered well in to the hundreds, and included family, friends, staff, and a huge contingent of performers (some 200 or more past and present Clay's artists), as well as other theatrical and business identities. Some of these were: representatives of the major theatrical organisations, the Tivoli, Fullers, the Stadium etc.; Vacluse and Newtown Councils (including the Newtown Mayor), the Actors Federation, the Theatrical Employees Association, and City Tattersalls. Others to attend were Bert Bailey, the Szarka Brothers, J.C. Bain (representing himself and Worth Brothers), George Audley, and many more. Almost all the reports of the funeral drew attention to both the size of the gathering as well as to the general opinion that the country, and particularly the theatrical community, had lost one of its most committed patrons.

Clay's continued to trade on, with Maurice Chenoweth taking over as the Managing Director of the Bridge Theatre Co Pty Ltd. Ex-Clay's performer Stan Kerridge is believed to have run the Newtown operations from this point on, and is also thought to have stayed on until the company folded in 1929. On September 5th 1925 the company gave its final performance at the Princess, the theatre having been sold by its owners, the Fullers. The Clay's management then relocated its operations to the Sydney Hippodrome, opening there on the 25th, with the Theatre magazine reporting that the company had "the present intention... [of providing] vaudeville and revue every Saturday afternoon and evening" (Aug. 1925, 36). The same article further records:

A considerable sum of money has been spent in improvements. Among these is a colour-lighted ramp, built in front of the stage, which is used as a promenade for the ballet. The idea was first introduced by Elliston at Drury Lane in the early part of the nineteenth century. Special scenery has also been painted and decorative curtains have been installed. The programme presented on the opening night was worthy of the traditions of the Clay management (36).

From 1926 onwards the company seems to have been plagued by a number of problems concerning its theatres. The Coliseum Theatre in North Sydney was inspected by administrators of the Theatre and Public Halls Act, with the report noting that considerable repair and renovation work was required. Subsequently, an order for improvements was issued by an Inspector Souter of the North Sydney Police Division (McPherson 50), but it is believed that the improvements were never undertaken by the company. Similarly, in 1928 the Bridge Theatre was found to be in need of renovations by the Chief Secretaries Department who classified the dressing room accommodation as totally inadequate, and directed that fire precautions, including draperies, scenery and fire-fighting appliances, be upgraded (Fire Commissioners File 1928-1958; NSW State Government Archives - File 20/15013).

Despite these problems Clay's continued to present shows at its major venues in addition to the now smaller suburban circuit. Around 1926/27, however, the company's advertising seems to have become less prominent, and hence information from reviews (which also diminished) becomes rather more difficult to find. In 1927 the management decided to try another Queensland tour, after some nine years absence, and this was once again presided over by the ever faithful Wally Edwards, with Nellie Kolle as the headline act. [see Chapter 5 for details] The suburbs played on the circuit during this period are mostly unknown, but suffice it to say North Sydney continued to attract strong audiences, and Balmain is reported to have also been another favourable location.

In 1928 the holiday pantomimes Babes in the Woods and Sinbad the Sailor were reported as playing at the Gaiety and Bridge theatres before touring the suburbs, and it seems that although very much scaled down the company was nevertheless managing to keep vaudeville and revue alive, no doubt supported by an audience base still attracted to variety. In August of that year, however, Maurice Chenoweth left Clay's to act as a

House Manager for the Fullers, leaving the operations in the hands of Kerridge and Sadler. Chenoweth's loss was most certainly a significant factor in the company's downturn over the final year or so, and this becomes quite apparent soon after his departure. In November, for example, Clay's seems to have placed their last advertisement in Everyone's, leading to the magazine virtually ignoring the company (although its previous coverage was less than effective anyway). Unfortunately, a consequence of this situation is that the flow of information published in regard to the company seems to have all but dried up.

One of the last published references to Clay's after this concerns Roy Rene and his fiancée Sadie Gale (who were then under contract to the company), and which appears in an Everyone's article focusing on divorce proceedings between Rene and his ex-wife (31 July 1929, 39). Among other things, Rene indicated that his salary with Clay's was £70 per week. While the exact commencement date for their season remains unclear at this stage, it is known that shortly after their wedding in July the pair toured Queensland with their "Merrymakers" troupe, the production costs apparently underwritten by the Clay organisation. [*See Chapter 5 for details*]⁵⁷

It seems likely that the Rene and Gale tour was one of the last major attempts by the company to return to its previous glory days. In another of the final references to the company, this one being part of a report from London for Everyone's (27 Nov. 1929, n. pag.), ex-Clay's performer Harry Taft makes note of a Clay's tour set for some time around then:

Sorry to hear that things in vaudeville are not so good in Australia. There's one thing I hope, and that is that the Clay tour manages to pull through the slump. I remember the month I had on it as one of the finest in my show experience, and there's a lot of Australians who can thank the Clay circuit for the start on a road that led to bigger and greater things.

By the end of the year, and shortly after the completion of the Merrymakers tour Harry Kitching, husband of Amy Rochelle and ex Australian Variety editor, took over the lease of the Bridge Theatre from Clay's, presenting a company billed as the Amy Rochelle-Stan Foley Revue Company (Everyone's 27 Nov. 1929, n. pag; and 15 Jan. 1930, 54). Sometime around this period, too, the Coliseum theatre at North Sydney had been lost to the company, with its final application for a license to operate there having been rejected and given to another organisation.⁵⁸

Although it is not known as yet how long Harry Kitching kept the lease of the Bridge Theatre, there is reason to suspect that it may well have been a short association. Apart from a few minor references in NSW Fire Brigade reports there is little information concerning the theatre available until 1934. In July of that

⁵⁷ Victoria Chance indicates in the Companion to Australian Theatre that the Rene tour was a Clay's production (485). Research undertaken for this thesis has so far failed to find any primary source evidence to prove this claim, however. Circumstantial evidence, on the other hand, does seem to suggest that it was underwritten by Clay's, and as such has been included in Chapter Four and Appendix C (with reservation).

⁵⁸ The Coliseum license eventually went to D.B. O'Connor of Lindfield (owner/manager of the D.B. O'Connor Opera Co, and ex-Clay's attraction).

year one H.E. Nagel, who is believed to have been a manager for the Broadway Theatre Co Ltd, was granted the new theatre license upon the expiry of the old one and it was under his management that the venue was renamed the Hub (the name it is still known by).⁵⁹ Some four years later (1938) it was closed down and renovated after a fire (and the subsequent fire brigade rescue) damaged significant portions of the auditorium, stage and offices. The theatre reopened on the 15th of December 1939, this time as a picture house, for which it was to be used as until its closure a few years ago.

Although the Hub Theatre was run by various people over the years it is thought to have remained under the ownership of Clay's company until around the late 1960s/early 1970s, at which time it is known to have been owned by Moorgate Pty. According to information held in Essie Clay's 1948 Deceased Estate File, it seems that her father's company, by then known as Clay's Theatres Ltd, had been trading relatively well over the past twenty years. The 1948 assessment of the company's books showed that it had made over the 1945-47 period an "average profit after payment of taxes = £432.13. 9." This was a very much lower result than the two year period 1946-47 indicates, due to a very poor Net Profit return in 1945. 1947, for instance, showed a £1,439.13. 5 Net Profit. The company's shares in 1947 were valued at 11/-, and considered by the company's accountants as representing fair value (Letter dated 29 Nov. 1948 - File No A135194, NSW State Government Archives). The company's operations at this time, still controlled by H.T. Morgan and Sons, are believed to have been in the area of theatre and property leasing. The theatre was eventually sold to Moorgate Pty Ltd sometime around the late 1960s/early 1970s. Hatmax Nominees Pty Ltd bought the theatre in October 1975. Hub Theatre lessees have included the Louis family (Motion Picture Exhibitors) in the 1960s, and Kenneth and Susan Wilcsek, in partnership with John Gould (between 1977 and 1983). Around this time the theatre was quite dilapidated and operated as an X-rated picture house. The building, which is still standing as of 1998 (although at the time of writing is looking very much the worse for wear), is apparently protected by local council heritage laws.

As to what eventually happened to Clay's company, this remains a mystery. With a key file currently missing from the State Government Archives, and there being no other record of a company registration number, the search has been to no avail. It is interesting to note that the Dead Companies Index, held at the State Government Archives, shows no mention of the company being declared inoperable prior to the closure of the index in the mid 1960s. A search undertaken by the Australian Securities Commission, too, has failed to locate any information regarding the Bridge Theatre Company, and hence this matter must remain unresolved for the time being. This and several other unknown aspects of Harry Clay's organisation, and indeed his personal life, therefore become the domain for further research, and it is hoped that this thesis will have in some way created the opportunity for such research to be carried out in the future.

⁵⁹ The original Hub Theatre, often referred to as the Hub No 1 so as to differentiate it from the Bridge Theatre (aka Hub No 2), was located in King Street and later became the Burland Hall.



Plate 40

The Hub Theatre, Newtown (ex-Bridge Theatre) in 1997
Front (from King Street) and Rear (looking at Alton Lane)
(Clay Djubal)

CHAPTER FIVE

"THE NSW AND QUEENSLAND TOURS: 1901-1918, 1927, 1929"

The king of vaudeville no doubt is Harry Clay,
And with his vaudevillians he'll drive dull care away;
He's travelled the Australian states
For twenty years or more,
And is known to many thousands
As the man who holds the floor;
The children coming out from school will shout "Hip, hip, hooray!"
When they see his posters on the wall for good old Harry Clay;
They hail his combination with delight whenever they appear,
And pack theatres nightly when he visits twice a year;
He'll be in this town shortly, so get ready one and all -
To give him a reception, and he'll make a regular call.

Harry Clay

(Theatre Jan. 1920, 26)

As this thesis has already noted, the relationship between Harry Clay's successful career as a Sydney based theatrical showman and his long association with country touring through Northern NSW and Queensland are irrevocably intertwined. As the previous chapters have suggested, and as this one will further investigate, the northern tours initially provided Clay with a capital from which he was able to subsidise the early outlays for his Sydney suburban circuit. His stature throughout Queensland in particular was such that he was able to establish a financial stability that kept the company afloat even during those periods when he was forced to close down the circuit in Sydney. Indeed his reputation and popularity grew so quickly in the north that he was able to dominate the Queensland circuit after only a few years.

Any historical consideration or survey of Harry Clay's organisation, then, requires at the very least an analysis of his northern operations. For not only was his company able to tour these regions annually for eighteen unbroken years - a feat not known to have been matched by any other vaudeville or minstrel company - but in addition, Clay would have been able to justifiably claim that his vaudeville and revue tours were the most popular ever presented in that state. As the following sample of quotations indicates,⁶⁰ Harry Clay's presence in Northern NSW and Queensland was well and truly considered a theatrical institution:

(West Maitland): The hall was packed in such a manner as few have ever witnessed. There were no seats available, and every foot of standing room was occupied. Those who went early had a glimpse at the waxworks, those who didn't go early couldn't get near the figures for the great crush. But it was not the waxworks that proved the draw, but the excellent

⁶⁰ For further examples of quotes and comment, most of which were located during the process of this dissertation's regional newspaper search, see Appendix I.

artists engaged by Mr Clay, and the evident popularity of the prices (Daily Mercury, Maitland, 7 July 1903: 3).

(Toowoomba): As seasons and successive years roll by, it is unusual to find entertainments improving as the season draws to its close - as a rule they gradually lose their interest - but it is in this feature in Mr Clay's entertainments which has enabled him to achieve the unique success that has rewarded his judgment and ability as a promoter of vaudeville's shows (Toowoomba Chronicle 4 Aug. 1906, 3).

(Gympie): Numerous as have been the different companies that have visited this town, none have been more popular or have met with better success than [Harry Clay's company] (Gympie Times 17 July 1913, 3)

(Charters Towers): Since its inception, over seventeen years ago, Clay's Vaudeville Company has been a household term amongst the amusement lovers of the North, and its annual visit has been welcomed with relish and looked forward to with glad anticipations. Good from the beginning, each recurring visit has seen the company grow stronger in numbers, and more advanced in quality and merit, and its all-round popularity has waxed greater in proportion, til it now holds a unique position in the minds of northern theatre-goers (Northern Miner 26 May 1917, 4)

Harry Clay's Waxworks and Vaudeville Company made their first foray into Queensland in 1901, the year after he and his family had toured with Walter Bell's combination through that state. As will shortly be seen, the similarities of content and style between Bell's and Clay's programmes, as well as the advertising layouts in the regional papers,⁶¹ suggests that Bell's tour was an important influence on the structure and logistics of Harry Clay's initial and subsequent tours. It is likely, too, that Clay's involvement and experiences in the previous tours would have not only allowed him to learn from the proprietors of each company, but also from those responsible for the many different facets of the operations as well. This knowledge and experience was to become an essential part of his own entrepreneurial philosophy - and were, in turn, used not only for the training of his managers but also as a basis for his company's business practice. Charles Norman recalls an aspect of Clay's style, noted in relation to one of his managers Bill Sadler:

In his day Sadler had been a performer touring with the Harry Clay [NSW country and suburban] circuit. Mr Clay himself was a shrewd showman. When travelling through the country with his shows you would see this significant figure in front of the theatre or hall with a bookmaker's bag slung over his shoulder, taking the money and giving the necessary tickets. Harry trusted no man. Bill Sadler came from the same school of thinking. So they learnt their values well (246).

⁶¹ The similarity between Clay's advertising layouts throughout all the regional newspapers (a layout not dissimilar to Bell's) and which does not appear to have been copied by other theatrical companies, suggests that Harry Clay, via his advance representative, was involved with the advertising design rather than this being the responsibility of each newspaper.

These two companies also share a number of similarities with John Rowley's waxworks and vaudeville tours. Rowley, an Englishman, and friend and past associate of Ben Fuller ("Candid and Comprehensive" 30), is known to have toured Queensland in 1897 and 1899. In 1897, as Rowley's Fine Art Waxworks Museum, he included a Gypsy Scientific Palmist, Cosmorama, and Punch and Judy Show in his programmes, while in 1899, under the banner of Rowley's Waxworks Museum and London Co, he presented a Diorama of Ireland, as well as mouth organ and singing competitions.

In comparing the similarities between Clay's and Walter Bell's tours one aspect which stands out is the fact that both presented to all intents and purposes "3 Shows in 1" (Northern Miner 15 Sept. 1900, 1). In this regard both men realised the advantage of providing maximum entertainment value for regional audiences. Thus while variety was certainly the dominant feature of the minstrel/vaudeville format, the ability to attract and sustain large numbers of paying customers from each town's population was seen as requiring more entertainment features. Hence the inclusion of added attractions such as wax models and a Cosmorama. Clay took the concept further, however, with the addition of automatic vending machines and limelight effects (as well as in later years the inclusion of moving pictures). The initial expense of purchasing these extras would no doubt have required of Harry Clay a significant financial outlay, and to this end it is likely that he would have secured the backing of one or more investors to raise the necessary capital. However the on-going costs would have been covered quite easily, particularly in light of the large turn-outs reported in the newspapers. Rail and shipping expenses (the transportation used for both tours) were cost effective in terms of there being no additional outlays (as would have been the case for those companies who used private motor vehicles in later years, for example). Labour costs, too, which involved the use of casual labourers to transport the equipment, sets and scenery from the wharves or railway stations to each venue, can also be considered as having been relatively cheap. Even with the low admission prices of 1/- and 6d for children, the size of the audiences, which ranged around 600 to 1,000 people per night depending on the size of the hall or theatre used, would have created a considerable return.⁶²

Another similarity between Bell's Waxworks tour and Clay's, apart from the obvious use of wax models and the cyclorama, is the regular inclusion of locals within the programmes. This is most notable through the variety of competitions held, including amateur singing, dancing, mouth organ, best baby and best cat contests etc, along with guessing competitions (whereby a glass jar of money would be shown in a local Shopkeeper's window, and the person to pick the closest amount would win a prize). These aspects of the production, which Clay eventually phased out of his programmes after establishing his shows on their performance merits, were just one of the ways in which the company could involve the community and invite return visits by the locals over the length of each season. He would, however, occasionally reintroduce dancing contests, particularly in response to crazes such as the Tango, with these being accompanied by free instruction to competitors prior to the performance (Toowoomba Chronicle 17 Mar. 1914, 6). Competitions were also very much a part of the children's matinee format (presented on Saturday afternoons), which continued as part of the weekly schedule right through to the final Queensland tour. [*See Appendix C for details of children's matinees*] During the early years, too, Clay would further involve himself in communities by sending members of the company, when time afforded it - this being generally on Sundays

⁶² The admission price changed very little over the length of Clay's tours, as can be seen in Appendix C. Some centres, as with Cairns, for example, required a higher admission charge (2/- and 1/-, with reserved seats 6d extra), and after a few years Clay charged an extra 1/- for dress circle and/or reserved seating in most towns. These 'popular prices' were not raised until the 1927 tour.

when there was no travelling required - into a hospital or as in one reported incident, to a nearby aboriginal community.⁶³

It can be argued, then, that Clay's reputation for servicing the regional communities with quality entertainment at low admission prices, along with his desire to position the company in the minds of the locals as something more than a troupe simply passing through, sets his tours apart from virtually all others during the period in question.⁶⁴ References to the return of the company in many of the local papers after the second or third year consistently locates each town's relationship with Clay's Waxworks and Vaudeville Company as being one of "our old friends." In this sense, too, Clay is seen to have been able to successfully balance the need for variety and change with that of familiarity. He would, for example, regularly change his artists - whether for each successive tour, or in later years within a tour itself - whereby he would replace a number of artists for the return visits as the company made its way back south - a strategy designed to maximise the potential for audience patronage. On the other hand, he was also aware that several of his artists, and no more so than Ted Tutty and Wally Edwards, along with Frank Herbert and Harry Elliot, had personal followings with the northern audiences, and hence they were regularly included in the tours. That Clay combined his own strategies and ideas with those of other companies he worked for is a logical conclusion. Furthermore it can be argued that his Walter Bell engagement would have been, in effect, the final phase of an experience-gathering period undertaken in order to fine-tune the extensive planning and logistical organisation required prior to the commencement of his tours.

The exact reasoning behind Harry Clay's decision to eventually focus his touring operations in Queensland is unknown. It is likely, however, that having established his popularity as a minstrel vocalist in that state, through previous tours for other companies, he would have recognised the opportunity to further exploit his name and reputation as a showman and not simply as a performer. In this sense the prospects of getting his "foot in the door" in the relatively untapped northern state would have been preferable to operating in the competitive arena of Victoria and NSW. It is quite feasible that Clay had toured throughout much Australia during his early career (perhaps leading him to initially attempt, as will shortly be discussed, Victorian and Tasmanian tours over the 1901/02 period). And these experiences would have therefore provided him with the ability to assess, early on, a much higher chance of success through concentrating his attention on the Queensland regions. In support of this argument is the evidence provided by a comprehensive search through several Queensland regional newspapers between 1893 and 1900, primarily the Toowoomba

⁶³ In 1903 the company visited the Deebing Creek Aboriginal settlement near Ipswich. The Queensland Times notes that "with commendable thoughtfulness Mr Clay arranged for a visit... [to the settlement] yesterday afternoon. Here the programme... proved to be a delightful treat for the children and some older ones who were there. Their enjoyment of the funny business was intense, and when the lollies which the visitors had kindly brought were distributed, their cup was full. It was a nice day for the company, who were struck by the progress made by the young aboriginals. In fact, there was an interchange of entertainment, for the 'natives' not only sang some of their songs but gave a corroboree" (16 June 1903, 7).

⁶⁴ In examining the Queensland regional papers during the 1901-18 period no record was found of any professional touring company offering cheaper admission prices than Clay's, although some did match his pricing policy.

ROWLEY'S WAXWORKS.

— THEATRE ROYAL, .

TO-NIGHT ——— TO-NIGHT.

THURSDAY, ..

AUGUST 10th. —

ROWLEY'S WAXWORKS

THE NIGHT OF THE SEASON,

Grand Competition Night.

COMIC SINGING COMPETITION,
For young men. Each competitor to
~~hold a live pig in his arms~~ while singing.
Prize—Silver Watch & Chain & £1 ls.

MOUTH ORGAN COMPETITION,
Open to All-comers. Prize—
A BAROMETER.

RECITATION COMPETITION,
For Boys and Girls under 16.
Prize—A GOLD MEDAL.

INDIAN BASKET TRICK,
For Boys, For A Prize.

NOTICE.—Thursday Night Only,
seating accommodation in the Gallery is
extra; children 6d. The whole of the
Gallery takings will be Given to the
Hospital.

ADMISSION.—One Shilling; Children
6d.

DOORS OPEN at 7 p.m.

Rowley's Waxworks
Charters Towers
(*Northern Miner* 10 Aug. 1899, 1)

T H E A T R E R O Y A L.

Charters Towers

TO-NIGHT TO-NIGHT

BELL'S

Waxworks

BOER WAR, and
LONDON VAUDEVILLE COMPANY.

AN ENTIRE CHANGE OF
PROGRAMME.

BABY SHOW!
BABY SHOW!
BABY SHOW!

PRIZE:—A GO CART

No Entrance to Competitors.

14 STAR ARTISTES 14

10,000 FEET OF BATTLE SCENERY.

3 SHOWS IN 1.

Admission 1/-. Children under 10
Half Price.

Doors Open 7 o'clock,
Entertainment 8 o'clock.

Bells Waxworks
Charters Towers
(*Northern Miner* 20 Sept. 1900, 1)

Plate 41

Chronicle and *Northern Miner* (Charters Towers), in addition to the *Gympie Times* and *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), which indicate that the competition for touring theatrical companies, and not just variety companies, was minimal - there having been very few to make the commitment to tour Queensland up until the turn of the century.⁶⁵ And while the proportion of dramatic and opera companies touring the north was

⁶⁵ Few theatrical companies made the trip up into northern Queensland between November and April due to the obvious weather conditions. But even during the cooler months the number of companies remained very low. As less than a handful of professional variety companies are known to have toured (on average) each year between 1893 and 1901, a list of the more significant or established ones would include: **1893** - Empire Minstrels; **1894** - Slade Murray's Oxford Co; **1895** - Coghill Brothers New Minstrels; **1896** - Delohery, Craydon and Holland / Harry Rickards New Tivoli Specialty Co; **1897** - Rowley's Fine Art Waxworks Museum; **1898** - J.C. Bain / Lucifer's Athletic-Comedy and Novelty Co; **1899** - Elite Vaudeville and Burlesque Co / The Big Burlesque Boom (Delohery, Craydon and Holland) / Rowley's Waxworks and London Co / J.C. Bain / Tivoli Musical and Comedy Co; **1900** - Orpheus McAdoo's Genuine Georgia Minstrels and Alabama Cake-Walkers / Bell's Waxworks; **1901** - Percy St. John's Royal Burlesque Specialty and Variety Co.

significantly higher than those of the variety kind, their numbers were also much lower than the number on tour throughout Victoria and NSW during this period.

Another aspect which would have played its part in Clay's decision to give Queensland a trial run, was the rapidly expanding railway system which made both the coastal and inland centres more accessible than he had himself experienced prior to this. Indeed, apart from the occasional use of steamers (for those coastal sections where there were no train lines), rail was Clay's only method of transport between towns. The Queensland Government, having begun building its railways in 1864, had gradually built up a number of systems throughout the state, although by 1901 the three major ones - the Great Northern Line, from Townsville to the west; the Central District Line, linking Rockhampton to Longreach etc; and the Southwestern Line, stretching from Brisbane through to Charleville in the west and north to Gladstone had not yet been linked. Despite the lack of connecting services, and the requirement to change train systems at the NSW and Queensland border, rail nonetheless served the practical needs of touring companies like Clay's for as long as there were towns of any size positioned along them.

How Harry Clay managed to raise the capital to invest in his first fully fledged tour is also unknown at this stage. That he apparently continued into NSW, Victoria and Tasmania after the first Queensland leg, rather than taking early steps towards establishing a Sydney circuit, suggests to some extent, however, that financial considerations - primarily the recouping of the initial investment - were paramount. In this regard touring made practical sense in that the likelihood of good sized audiences in entertainment starved regional centres was high. Furthermore, the competition in Sydney would have placed his success in far more jeopardy than with the Queensland experiment. Thus it is highly probable that Clay had found himself one, or several, financial backers, including A.R. Abbot who is believed to have accompanied him on at least part of the Queensland leg.⁶⁶ In support of this is the obvious outlay required for the tour, which apart from the extra attractions and associated equipment, also included the initial advertising (payment in advance⁶⁷), telegraph wires (both prior to and during the tour), accommodation, rail and steamer transport, as well as performers' salaries, all of which would have required a capital that Clay was unlikely to have been able to raise without financial support on an investment basis.

⁶⁶ Abbot is recorded as arriving in Townsville from Cairns on the same steamer as the Waxworks Co in June 1901 (North Queensland Register 29 June 1901: "Shipping News"). While it is possible that this may have been a coincidence, the likelihood that Clay's future partner in Bridge Theatre Pty Ltd was already financially involved with Harry Clay is equally possible.

⁶⁷ Payment in advance was apparently not required of Clays throughout Queensland in later years. Bob Bell, a prominent end-man and comedian in Australia during the late 1800s/early 1900s, records in a series of short articles for Australian Variety in 1917, that "Harry Clay's agent, is I believe, the only man who can go through [Qld] without paying in advance. Clay has a fine name from North to South, and it is a credit to the fact that he is a thoroughbred Australian" (Bell n. pag.)

THEATRE ROYAL.

To-Night. To-Night.

THE LAST NIGHT OF

CLAY'S

WAXWORKS

and Vaudeville Company,

Free Gifts. Free Gifts.

Everyone entering the Theatre To-Night
receives a Gift.

NEW PROGRAMME !

TO-NIGHT.

Don't Forget--Your Last Chance.

1s. ADMISSION. 1s.

Children under 10 Half Price.

Plate 42
(Gympie Times 4 Apr. 1901, 2)

It should be mentioned here, though, that Clay certainly did not tour his company on the cheap. Shipping notices during the early years indicate, for example, that his company travelled first class, and it is highly likely that the same applied to the rail travel also.⁶⁸ With many of the rail journeys requiring long stretches, and with the added burden of arriving in towns at all hours of the night and day, this consideration of his troupe's comfort (which certainly did not apply to all touring companies) would have been a deciding factor

⁶⁸ There have been a number of examples of these shipping notices found to date - one such example being published in the Daily Mercury 9 May 1910, 6, which shows the company departing on the Bullarra for southern ports out of Mackay on the 8th of May - all members in first class.

in the success of the tours. In this regard the performers would have arrived at each destination somewhat fresher than might otherwise have occurred. Travelogues of touring shows published during the first two decades of the twentieth century abound in tales of problems encountered by companies touring the country centres - being locked out of hotels in the early morning hours, unsanitary conditions in the small towns, and the lack of ready assistance at the railways for sets and luggage etc.⁶⁹

In terms of attempting to capture the essence of Harry Clay's tours through Queensland, however, problems arise for the researcher with regard to the constant changing of the itinerary and logistical operations. On the other hand this was very much the pivotal aspect of Clay's continued success in that state, brought about by constantly adapting his tours to meet whatever changes and requirements were necessary. Whether this involved the towns and audiences, the programmes, or the artists, Clay persistently maintained the philosophy of never allowing the paying customers an opportunity to complain about the value or quality of his shows. And it is this aspect which easily dominates contemporary reports and reviews of his programmes throughout the state, and indeed throughout all of the tours.

In its January 1916 issue the Theatre briefly acknowledged Clay's Queensland tours, noting that:

Harry Clay has sent a vaudeville company to Queensland regularly every year for the last seventeen years. The season extends from February to August. Mr Clay plays from twenty to twenty-five places in Queensland, and from ten to fifteen places in New South Wales on his way there and back. Nowhere does he open for less than three nights. His longest season is nine nights, at each of the two Queensland towns, Rockhampton and Townsville (35).

While one or two points are not entirely correct for all the tours - some seasons (generally return visits) are known to have been less than three nights, while the towns visited on the NSW legs were lesser in number during the early years - this was essentially the modis operandi for the tours.⁷⁰ The company would generally start off with seasons west of Sydney (notably Lithgow, Katoomba and Bathurst), then travel by rail to Newcastle and Maitland where they would again present themselves, before taking the north-west mail-train through Tamworth to Toowoomba, and across through Ipswich and on to Gympie. After this the tours would follow several routes north and west through the state, adapting the itinerary each year to suit their needs. The following list of towns (recorded alphabetically) are those that Harry Clay's company are known to have visited during his vaudeville company's nineteen tours:

⁶⁹ Some interesting articles of this kind include: Frederick Ward's "Country Touring in NSW" (1926), Albert Goldie's "From Town to Town: The Joys of Country Showmen" (1917), and a series published in Green Room over 1918-19 titled "Through Queensland with 'Yours Radiantly,'" a highly amusing account of a picture show agent's promotional tour for Paramount Pictures during that period. Citations for these are included in the bibliography.

⁷⁰ As previously mentioned, a great deal of information regarding the Queensland tours is provided in Appendix C. This includes the names of artists, managers, operators, musical directors etc, known to have toured, as well as known itinerary dates, farces, films and miscellaneous attractions etc.

<u>NSW</u>	<u>Qld</u>		
* Bathurst	Alligator Creek	Freizland	Mt Morgan
Goulburn	Atherton	* Gympie	Nelson
Gunnedah	Ayr	Herberton	* Rockhampton
Inverell	Barcaldine	Hughenden	* Toowoomba
* Katoomba	* Bundaberg	* Ipswich	* Townsville
* Lithgow	Cairns	Irvinebank	Warwick
* Maitland (West)	* Charters Towers	Longreach	
Moree	Chillagoe	* Mackay	
Newcastle	Cloncurry	Mareeba	
Tamworth	Dalby	* Maryborough	
Werris Creek	Finch Hatton	* Mt Chambers	

(* denotes those towns which were visited regularly between 1901-1918)

As the length of visits to the major centres contracted,⁷¹ these being primarily the coastal towns, along with Toowoomba, Ipswich and Charters Towers, Clay would open up new places which had not been visited previously due to their smaller size. As he himself notes in speaking "enthusiastically of Queensland as a great state" to the Theatre in its October 1911 issue. "Towns are springing up that you would never have dreamt of playing in a few years ago. To-day you can take a good-sized company into them, with most payable results" (29).

Similarly the NSW sections would also be adapted over time, playing shorter seasons in the major centres, with the slack being taken up by visiting those centres further afield - places such as Moree, Gunnedah, Werris Creek and Inverell. During the early years, however, a town had to be of sufficient size to attract Clay's attention. Thus while places such as Armidale and Glen Innis, for example, were situated along the north-west mail line, they were initially left off the itinerary because their smaller populations could not support a show the size of Clay's (Tamworth News 1 Aug. 1904, 2).

Although Harry Clay's knowledge of Queensland obviously played its part in the establishment of the circuit, the duties undertaken by his advance representative were also an essential part of the success of each tour. This position was initially filled by Jimmy Boyle, the dapper little Englishman whose friendship with Harry Clay apparently lasted until his death in 1924 - some three months prior to Clay's. The advance rep's job was to organise the tour from Sydney during the months prior to its commencement, writing letters to secure venues and to notify local newspapers, booking accommodation, contacting the bill poster in each town, and any other necessary arrangements. This was naturally done in consultation with Clay, who would plan the logistical aspects first. In the days prior to the company leaving on tour the rep would travel ahead, arriving in each centre with dodgers, day bills and posters, which it may be assumed were given to local

⁷¹ During the first ten years centres such as Townsville, Rockhampton and Charters Towers would attract a season of around ten nights, with most of the other large towns being played for between three to seven nights. After this period the length of the seasons declines, although the shows still continued to attract large to full houses. It seems, however, that the tours could not maintain the numbers over the larger spread of nights. During the second decade of these tours Clay's policy of low admission prices, at odds with the general rise in costs, required him to play more compact seasons (with large attendances) rather than longer ones with smaller attendances.

youths to distribute in exchange for free tickets (as with his Sydney and NSW country circuits). He would also arrange and oversee the newspaper advertising, before travelling on to the next town along the itinerary.

As essential as the advance rep was to the smooth running of each tour, in a sense the promotional aspects involved in country touring during this era required a somewhat lesser (or perhaps different) level of attention and expenditure than was required in order to run a city circuit. In support of this a 1908 Theatre magazine article records, "news travels fast in the country, and a show of any sort, [is] always advertised from town to town by the coach passengers, and the commercial travelers" ("Spangles" 15). However, as with today's theatrical advertising campaigns, the response by the public to a show would be very much a matter of how it was perceived by them. One particular viewpoint on country touring during the period is expressed by Albert Goldie, who in writing for the Theatre in June 1917, records:

Country people turn over a coin till they know the date by heart before they spend it in amusement... The showman in the country is regarded as a species of spieler, whose chief mission is to 'take money out of the town.' He is deeply resented at first, and if he succeeds in paying his way a few times he comes to be tolerated. And this is the most he can hope for. The only way to make oneself popular with country audiences is to make speeches from the stage, thanking them for their patronage, and telling them that they are the most intelligent audience that it has ever been your pleasure to appear before. Poor old Dan Barry never missed a chance in this respect. It is said of him that he would go around from house to house delivering dodgers, mainly to pat children on the head, and tell their mothers what little dears they were (10).

Clay and his advance rep's usual method was to make an initial (paid) announcement of his intended season some ten days or so prior to the company's visit, followed by further advertisements one or two days immediately before the start. During a season, however, he would rarely advertise every issue (if printed daily), the method being to leave a gap of a day (or sometime two) between insertions. In this sense he was most likely utilising his reputation as a drawcard, in addition to generating word of mouth advertising within each community through the shows themselves, rather than rely on the unnecessary cost brought about by over-saturation in the newspapers.

During the first four years the tours were known as Clay's Waxworks and Vaudeville Company, and presented the same style of programme as Clay's would become renowned for on the Sydney circuit, but with the inclusion of the special attractions. The doors would generally open at 7.15 or 7.30, allowing the audience time to socialise and peruse the waxworks and Cosmorama, operate the "penny gaff" machines - which dispensed such things as sweets, delineations of a person's character, or showed scenic views of exotic places or wars - the Boer war being particularly popular during the first few years. Musical selections would also be played from audio machines such as the theatrephone, which Maitland's Daily Mercury described as working "on the same principle as the gramophone" (19 Feb. 1901, 2).

Very little information concerning the Cosmorama exhibitions toured by Harry Clay throughout Queensland between 1901 and 1908 has been located, despite a comprehensive search of newspapers. The only clues to be found are in the limited descriptions used by the various reviewers. Words such as "stereoscopic views," and "illuminated scenes," have been noted, for example, while the Queensland Times recorded that "through the agency of the Cosmorama patrons may have a peep at the views of London and Paris by night" (7 Apr. 1904, 9). In light of such information, then, it seems probable that he toured an optical picture exhibition that consisted of a portable box with a lens at the front, and through which one looked. At the rear, and illuminated by some sort of light would be either one or two small paintings (two if the exhibition was in fact a stereoscopic one), and on either side would be panels, creating a tunnel, and thus providing the spectator with the illusion of depth.⁷²

The waxworks, which in 1903 were reported as numbering around fifty (Daily Mercury 7 Mar. 1903, 2), would also be positioned around the auditorium as well as in the foyer area alongside the various automatic machines. The figures were frequently changed and added to, particularly the criminal characters. "As fresh crimes are discovered, figures of the perpetrators are added to the collection," noted the Queensland Times (7 Apr. 1904, 7) in relation to the company's Ipswich season. Some of the most popular waxworks in the collection over the years included the Governor brothers ("the Breelong Blacks"), who were presented in tableaux; the Kenniff family (Queensland's recently captured and tried rustlers and murderers); and sportspeople such as Bill Squires (Australian heavyweight contender) and cricketer Victor Trumper. Others included dignitaries such as the Royal family, popes, famous soldiers and politicians. In researching those people represented by the figures [*a list of models known to have been toured is included as part of Appendix C*] it becomes clear that many of these waxworks were very current to the population's awareness or imagination, lending further credence to the notion that Clay was intent on presenting "up to the minute entertainment" on these tours.

Central to this period of the evening's entertainment, however, was the role of the tour manager, whose job it was to collect the money, issue tickets, usher people to their seats and more importantly to meet with and make his acquaintance with the locals. It is most likely that Harry Clay would have undertaken this role himself in the early years of touring (in addition to being the business manager), with the responsibility taken on by Jimmy Boyle for many years after 1905. With his stage commitments requiring his nightly attention on these tours, it can be assumed that even prior to 1905 Clay would have had to employ someone to assist him with these duties, however. It is believed that Bert Howard may well have undertaken this role when he toured with Clay. As Jimmy Boyle is not known to have been a performer, it can be assumed that

⁷² The first Cosmorama was opened in Paris in 1808, with a London exhibition opening for the first time in 1820. The word Cosmorama was initially used to designate an astronomical exhibition, but was later adopted as a synonym for a superior grade of peepshow. In subsequent years they were sometimes called Diorama or Panorama exhibitions (Altick, 211-212). There is some suggestion that rather than being Cosmoramas, Harry Clay's "peep shows" were instead stereoscopic exhibitions, and that the term Cosmorama had been applied for reasons unknown. [*See Appendix C, p114, for further details*]

from 1905 onwards he took on both the tour and business managing roles, as Wally Edwards would in later years, he having retired from performing by that stage. Between the advance rep and the tour manager, much information about the local community could be gathered. Both were required to remember information such as faces and names for future reference. In this way Clay's tours were able to locate themselves within the community more or less as visiting friends rather than just a theatrical company passing through.

The program proper would begin at 8pm, and up until 1917 consisted of the first-part minstrel format and second-part olio [*as described in Chapter Two*]. In the early years, the role of interlocutor would naturally be taken by Harry Clay, who also doubled as tenor and illustrated singer [*discussed later*]. The musical accompaniment for virtually all the tours was simply a piano, played for the first five years by T.W. Rhodes. The role of Music Director was perhaps the most important in terms of the company's performance, he or she being responsible not only for accompaniments, but also for providing punctuation for comic instances - this role traditionally being the domain of a percussionist. It is likely that a programme could succeed if one or two turns failed to work successfully on any particular night, but without strong performances night after night by the pianist, a touring show could quite possibly fail to attract the required patronage for that season or any other.

Although unfavourable criticism of acts or shows rarely occurred in newspapers and trade journals until sometime around the end of the second decade of the twentieth century ⁷³ (and thus it becomes difficult to establish an accurate reflection of their quality), the audiences were very able (and vocal) in their appreciation of the differences in the quality of the turns on show. As this thesis has already mentioned in Chapter One, Charles Norman's recollection of his days touring Clay's NSW country circuit suggests that the audiences were quite knowledgeable and aware of performers' abilities and shortfalls. With regard, then, to the music director (and musicians in general) on these tours, Norman further recalls the professionalism and talents that these people brought with them, and the integral role they played in each night's performance:

They knew the show, and they knew how to handle the show. My word they were great. They knew how to keep the applause going and so forth. They were very useful indeed. Yes, exactly. Oh they were good....We depended on them. They were excellent. Their timing was great. They understood the show beautifully (Appendix H, 209).

⁷³ An example of the change in this general attitude towards criticism can be seen in the 25 Mar. 1920 issue of Australian Variety in which the editor announced that "during the past few months, much of the policy of our vaudeville write-ups has been changed. For too long we had allowed inferior acts to pass muster with the best offerings on the programme, and for just such a length of time, we had refrained from stirring up performers for serving up the same old 'junk'... This time we decided to be a little more critical in our opinions, and have carried out this idea" (4).

THEATRE ROYAL
To-Night. To-Night.

Clay's Waxworks
and Vaudeville Company,

with all the LATEST NOVELTIES
 from London and Paris.

SPLENDID WAX TABLEAUX,
 including the
Breelongs Blacks.
10 Star Variety Artists. 10

1s. ADMISSION. 1s.
 Children under 10 Half Price.
 Doors open 7.15. Entertainment 8 p.m.
JAMES W. BOYLE,
 Advance Rep.

Gympie
 (Gympie Times 26 Mar. 1901, 2)

SCHOOL OF ARTS.
TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT.
LAST NIGHT. LAST NIGHT.

CLAY'S WAXWORKS
Free Gifts. Free Gifts.
EVERYONE RECEIVES A GIFT.

Admission, 1s.; Children under ten, half-price.
 Overture, 8 o'clock.

Maryborough
 (Maryborough Chronicle 26 Apr. 1902, 1)

PUBLIC NOTICE.
LAST NIGHT. LAST NIGHT.
WIRTH BROS.'
GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
 THIS AFTERNOON AT 3 GRAND MATINEE
CHILDREN, 6d.
TO-NIGHT at 8, GRAND SPECTACULAR PAGEANT, representing the
GRAND DURBAR OF DEHLI,
 IN WHICH THE WHOLE OF WIRTHS GREAT COMPANY
 WILL APPEAR.
PRICES, 4s., 3s., and 2s.
 Children, Half-price to all Parts.
 All Accounts paid at the Circus Office at 11 o'clock this morning. 2685

TOWN HALL.
TO-NIGHT. LAST NIGHT.
CLAY'S COMEDY COMPANY.
 ENTIRE CHANGE OF PROGRAMME.
 ADMISSION, 6d.; FRONT SEATS AND CIRCLE, 1/. CHILDREN UNDER
 10, Half-price

TOWN HALL.
This Afternoon This Afternoon.
 GRAND CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE.
 PRIZES WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE FOLLOWING COMPETITIONS:-
 FOR GIRLS-
 BEST DRESSED DOLL: Rolled Gold
 Bangle, value 10/6.
 RECITATION Ladies Dressing Case.
 SKIPPING Rolled Gold Bangle,
 value 10/6
 CHILDREN, 3d.
 DOORS OPEN 2.15 p.m. 2756
 FOR BOYS-
 SINGING Gent's Gun Metal Lever
 Watch, value 10/6.
 BASKET TRICK: Handsome Pen-
 knife, value 5/.
 TUG OF WAR: 6 Handsome Prizes.
 ADULTS, 6d.

Toowoomba
 (Toowoomba Chronicle 4 July 1906, 1)

Amusements.
THEATRE ROYAL
TO-NIGHT! TO-NIGHT!
LAST NIGHT OF
L A Y ' S
WAXWORKS AND COMPANY.
GRAND REQUEST NIGHT.
NEW ILLUSTRATED SONGS.
NEW MOVING PICTURES.
 The Bottle of Money will be given
 away in the Theatre To-night.
 1/- ADMISSION. 1/-
 Children under Ten Half-price.
THIS AFTERNOON at 2.15 o'clock,
a SPECIAL PERFORMANCE FOR
CHILDREN.
 All Children, 3d.; Adults, 6d.

Charters Towers
 (Norther Miner 4 July 1908, 1)

SCHOOL OF ARTS, MACKAY.

To-Night. To-Night.

Completely new programme.

CLAY'S WAXWORKS CO.

Instantaneous success of our—

14 STAR ARTISTS 14

In New Songs and Dances.

House crowded to the doors. New Illustrated Songs, "I Can't Forget my mother Dear," by Elsie McGuire. "Dancing Sunshine," by Stan. Kerridge. The latest Moving Pictures. "The Anarchist's Sweetheart," and "The Punition Steeple chase."

Admission: 1/-: Front seats extra; Children under 10, half-price.

JAMES W BOYLE,
Manager.

Mackay

(Daily Mercury 4 May 1910, 2)

THEATRE ROYAL

FOR A SHORT SEASON ONLY..

Commencing **THIS [Thurs.] EVENING**

HARRY CLAY'S HARRY

COMPANY

A FEAST OF AMUSEMENT FOR
OLD AND YOUNG.

16—STAR ARTISTS—16.

Specially Selected from the Leading
Theatres of Australasia.

MISS MAUDE FANNING.

Australian Coon Impersonator.

Beautifully Illustrated Songs. 14th
Annual Tour, the finest Combination
now touring, and going stronger than
ever The popular Entertainment at
Popular Prices. Admission as usual.

Gympie

(Gympie Times 10 June 1916, 3)

THEATRE ROYAL TO-NIGHT.

Harry ('CLAYS') Company

IN A COMPLETE CHANGE OF
PROGRAMME.

PICKED VAUDEVILLE ARTISTS.

MANY NEW ARTISTS.

MANY OLD FAVOURITES.

**LAUGHTER IS THE BEST
MEDICINE**

Gympieites

Come and get your Medicine.

Prices as Usual.

Admission, 1/- everywhere. No Half
Price.

Further particulars, see Day-Bills,
etc.

WALL EDWARDS, Manager.

Gympie

(Gympie Times 10 June 1916, 3)

THEATRE ROYAL

TO-NIGHT! LAST TWO NIGHTS OF TO-NIGHT!

HARRY CLAY'S COMPANY

IN A COMPLETE CHANGE OF PROGRAMME EACH NIGHT.

IN MUSICAL REVUE AND VAUDEVILLE.

30,000 MILES A MINUTE!

30,000 MILES A MINUTE!

21st || ANNUAL TOUR || 21st.

which speaks for itself.

LAUGHTER IS MEDICINE.

Come and get your Medicine.

PEOPLES POPULAR PRICES.

Seats may be reserved at Mc

Cullagh's.

Manager—WALLY EDWARDS

Charters Towers

(Northern Miner 27 June 1918, 2)

In his autobiography, Roy Rene provides a useful account of the vaudeville first part as it was presented around the time he was engaged by Harry Clay:

Vaudeville in those days was a very different proposition from the theatre of to-day. When I was first working, even revues were unknown. To begin with, the curtain didn't go up on a ballet of beautiful girls dancing across the stage. The ballet and chorus were one, and we called them seat-warmers, they used to sit round the back of the stage, and though all of them could sing, they didn't all dance. The curtain goes up and there is the whole company on stage with the chorus seat-warming. Then two cornermen on each side and the interlocutor right in the middle. The corner men would strike up on the bones and kettle drums and go into their minstrel act, and then the interlocutor with a real flourish would say at the beginning of the opening chorus, "Ladies and gentlemen, be seated." Then he'd call out, "Ladies and gentlemen, Boy Roy, the comic singer," and I'd come off the corner while the other performers gave me a hand and helped build me up, and I'd do my act and go back on the corner. Then he'd call out, "Miss So-and-so." She might be a famous singer or a comic act, but she'd get up and come forward and do her turn and go back to her seat when it was over.

Of course when the curtain first rose we wouldn't all be sitting looking half alive. Everyone would be doing their business and the jugglers juggling, and so on. All those acts would go on until the 9 o'clock interval... (52-53)



Plate 45

[Left] A young Ted Tutty

[Right] Ted Tutty in blackface ca.1951 (at Sammy Lee's)

Without doubt Harry Clay's most consistently popular Qld tourist, Tutty was said to have been to Clay what Irving Sayles was to Harry Rickards

(Photographs courtesy of Jo Mercer and Del Buchanan)

From 1905 Clay would sometimes depart from the established minstrel format by closing the first-part with a short moving picture, or a specialty act - generally an advertised attraction. After the interval the traditional second-part, the olio, would begin, often starting with a solo piano piece, followed by what many saw as the evening's highlight presentation, this being the Illustrated Songs. These specialty turns would continue their popularity well into the second decade of Clay's involvement in Queensland. They were performed to background scenery and mood visuals, created at first through limelight lanterns and slides, and later with film, both of which were thrown onto a large white sheet on the stage. Almost always sung by the premier vocalists on each tour - artists such as Harry Clay, Stan Kerridge, Wally Edwards, Frank Herbert, May Reade, and Thelma Woods, to name the most popular, they were also extensively promoted in newspaper advertising.

The inclusion of the "illustrated song" meant that the company needed the services of an operator. During the first four years this was in the capacity of a limelight projectionist, the person who not only presented the visual effects for those songs but was also responsible for projecting spotlight effects onto the stage through the same machine. Later, the role of operator also involved the screening of the moving pictures as well. Some of these men, like longtime Clay employee, Lou Courtney, doubled as entertainers - he being renowned for an equilibrist turn, which included plate spinning. During the early part of the century, too, they often received public recognition for their role. Courtney, A.T. McIntyre, and in later years, Les Cannis, were regularly mentioned in advertising, with Courtney, for example, being described in 1910 as "the well-known electrician" (Queensland Times 19 Mar. 1910, 4). Limelight projecting was a particularly difficult operation, necessitating long periods of intense concentration as a combination of gasses was manipulated. The projectionists also needed to respond to the intimate movements of the artists and each programme's lighting requirements.⁷⁴ Some reviews of these Illustrated Songs present an idea of their effect, as in the Maitland Daily Mercury of 1904:

The dissolving effects and the representations of a snow storm were beautiful and realistic. The lantern is of the latest American pattern, and the pictures are thrown on the screen sharply and clearly (10 Mar. 1904, 2).

While the Northern Miner in 1905 described the entertainment thus:

A feature of particular merit about the performances given by Mr Clay are the picture songs. The music of these is both new and pretty. They are admirably sung, and the manner in which the company's operator, Mr MacIntyre, manipulates the lantern, particularly in the matter of getting the beautiful dissolving effects which he secures, supplies all that is

⁷⁴ Limelight projecting consisted of a block of lime (or calcium) heated to incandescence by impinging jets of burning oxygen and hydrogen onto it, and focusing this through a lense onto the stage. Slides would be used to create the visual images, and by manipulating the intensity of the lime block, effects such as dissolving scenes etc could be presented. Limelight operating required considerable attention, as the calcium needed constant adjustment, as did the cylinders of oxygen and hydrogen. Prior to the advent of cylinders, these gasses were transported in canvas bags, which according to reports, tended to leak all too often. Manipulating these bags meant that the operator had to squeeze them with his feet under pressure boards. Sometimes, however, audience members standing or seated next to the planks would inadvertently apply added pressure to the gasses, causing various problems for the operator such as extra light (Gunn 126).

necessary to make these contributions absolutely the best of their kind ever seen on the local stage (22 May 1905, 7).

Following on from the illustrated songs the olio would again consist of separate turns. As previously explained, this second-part did not require the other members of the company to sit around in the minstrel semi-circle while an act was working. This section of the programme also differed from the first in that it presented more partnership acts (pairings of individual artists, not just regular partnerships), as well as specialty performances. Any specialised drop sheets used by each act to mask the following act's preparation, it seems, would have been their own responsibility - as it is known, for instance, that Clay's scenic artist Alec Stagpoole (who worked for the company from around 1915 onwards) specialised in designing cloths for performers. The rights to these sheets, and primarily their design, were considered to be copyrighted by the performers. There were several instances when warnings were published by the owners regarding the copying of the designs.

Between 1905 and 1913, the second part would also include one or several films (if not shown in the first part). These were invariably advertised as having been purchased from overseas (mostly England and America), and as being screened by the latest machines (also imported). In 1906, for instance, the projector used was the Sperantoscope, described as the very latest – "being driven by a motor [and giving] the best moving picture" (*Gympie Times* 7 July 1906, 3). The film screenings were, naturally, an enormously popular attraction during Clay's early tours, but it seems that by 1912 the professional cinema showmen could better present them, and thus they were no longer included in his programmes.



Plate 46

Maud Fanning "Australia's Premier Coon Singer" and her youngsters, Huia, Violet and Lalla.
(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)

The programmes always finished with a short "screaming farce," in which many of the performers returned to take up roles. Indications are that during the early years at least, most of these farces seem to have been around for some time, if not always having been toured through the areas that Clay's operated. After about 1910, however, several are known to have been written by Clay's own performers who later became professional revue writer/producers. This suggests that the farces became an early creative learning process for them prior to the advent of the revue. But it would not be until 1917, the year after the emergence of the revue as a popular feature on Clay's Sydney suburban and NSW country circuits, that they became part of the Queensland programmes.

While Harry Clay's waxworks, vaudeville and revue tours make up the bulk of his known touring operations through Queensland, it is also known that he made several attempts at serious dramatic tours during this time, too. In 1908, for instance, he sent the first of such tours through the state, with his daughter Essie in the principal female roles. Under the banner of Clay's Dramatic Company, it is believed the 20 or so actors and stage crew began the tour in or around Rockhampton, there being no other dates found so far that predate that season. The company's itinerary then seems to have included the coastal towns south as far as Gympie, before crossing to Toowoomba. It can be presumed that they then made their way back to Sydney along the vaudeville company's usual northern NSW leg.

The tour's advance representative was Jack Campbell, later to manage Clay's 1913 Queensland tour, while Harry Clay led the tour himself. Presenting four productions, The World Against Her, The Irishman, Camille, and The Marriage of Mary Anne, the tour received mixed reviews, depending both on the town played and the section of the tour. In this sense it seems that the company, and particularly Essie Clay, got much better as it went along. However, several reviewers found that Miss Clay's age and lack of dramatic experience worked against her to a certain extent, most notably in the role of Camille. The company did, however, contain several very experienced actors, most notably John Cosgrove,⁷⁵ Harry Norman (previously a Bland Holt Co stage manager), and Sydney Everett. In addition to these were Lancelot Vane (Jim Gerald's brother) and Albert Lucas, the company's young lead actor. Another cast member was Walter Whyte, late of the J.C. Williamson Repertoire Company, and at the time arguably the country's leading tenor.⁷⁶ Harry Clay and Will Wynand, who would work for Clay's vaudeville company over the next four years or so, also accompanied the tour as singer and comic-actor respectively.

⁷⁵ John Cosgrove was an actor considered by many of his contemporaries as one of the great characters of his day. With a brilliant mind for acting and writing, and one of Australia's early film pioneers, he nonetheless failed to reach the height of his profession due to, as George Lauri puts it, "the vagabond streak within him." Lauri also calls him the "unlicensed jester of Poverty Point... [the] Crown prince of pretense, gay cavalier of cadgerdom," and one whose "wit was a sparkling as his impudence sublime." Cosgrove is supposed to have said of himself that he was one who "loitered along life's highway with hand outstretched to every man" (35).

⁷⁶ Early in 1909 Whyte's services were secured for the production Elijah, mounted by the Sydney Philharmonic Society, and is known to have worked variously in theatre as well as in vaudeville for Clay's, J.C. Bain, Fullers. He toured England around 1912.

While the reviews of the productions suggest that the company was on the whole neither bad nor brilliant, the relatively large turn-outs and the generally good response to the plays by those audiences no doubt stimulated Clay's desire to give Queensland another try with regard to dramatic productions. Perhaps sensing the need to present something out of the ordinary - in order to keep his reputation in the minds of the Queensland public at the same level as his vaudeville tours had been doing - Clay arranged a company to support the celebrated Scottish tragedian, Walter Bentley, through that state. Bentley, then aged sixty, and a former acting associate of Henry Irving, had toured Australia on a number of occasions from 1891, presenting notable productions such as The Silver King, Rob Roy, David Garrick, Richard the III, and arguably his finest Shakespearian role as Hamlet. This 1909 tour, then, was to present Harry Clay with the biggest drawcard of his entrepreneurial career to that stage. [*A profile on Bentley appears in Appendix G*]

Bentley had reportedly enjoyed a highly successful ten night season at Sydney's Criterion Theatre immediately prior to the Clay tour, presenting Hamlet under the direction of Stanley McKay. While Clay arranged to provide his own company of actors to support Bentley, it is believed that he purchased the scenery and costumes from McKay for his tour, these being designed and produced respectively by Harry Whaite who was arguably Australia's leading stage designer, and Zenda, one of Sydney's leading costume makers. The Theatre wrote of Bentley's Criterion season:

It is good for a big city to get a shock now and then; and by Jehosophat! it got it in the Walter Bentley season.... After his season of ten nights at the Criterion... [he] was presented with a diamond pin and a purse of 65 golden sovereigns by his admirers. This was in addition to houses that amazed theatre-goers. The Criterion was packed at 7.30 nightly, and people stood three and four deep merely to hear the actor's voice - for they couldn't possibly see him. It is too late in the day to presume to criticise Walter Bentley as a Shakespearian actor. Intellectual, emotional and magnetic personality that he is, it is only left to ask what on earth managers are thinking of to foist actors like Oscar Asche on Australia when Bentley is at hand and free. To see Bentley enter, cross, and leave the stage is an education in deportment. He does not strut like Irving, nor does he heavily move like Asche... Unfortunately, Mr McKay... was unable to get an extension of his short lease on the theatre, otherwise the Bentley season would have flourished long⁷⁷ ("Criterion" 18).

Walter Bentley's Queensland tour, which was produced by Clay and included Essie Clay in the lead female roles, opened in Brisbane's His Majesty's Theatre on the 4th of September. The opening production, Hamlet, had been specially prepared by Bentley from the 1623 folio. The Brisbane Courier records that it "retained the finer and more interesting scenes, and [in] concentrating the more powerfully dramatic portions of Shakespeare's tragedy, has lost that which was generally considered to delay the denouement, while not adding interest by reason of irrelevancy' (30 Aug. 1909, 2). Other productions toured by the 23 strong

⁷⁷ McKay had been notified that the Criterion was to be free for a fortnight some months before he engaged Walter Bentley. He apparently arranged the season with the Scottish actor prior to his departure for a season in Adelaide where he was to present The Silver King. According to the Theatre, the young burgeoning entrepreneur was "seriously handicapped in his negotiations with Mr Bentley, and his preparations generally for the production. But in two and a half weeks - which was all the time Mr McKay had - he formed a company to support Mr Bentley, who only returned to Sydney for the final rehearsals three or four days before opening night. It proved to be the most successful Shakespearian season Mr Bentley ever played' (Nov. 1910 n. pag.).

troupe of actors included: The Courier of Lyons, David Garrick, The Bells: Or the Murder of the Polish Jew, Crammond Brig: or The King and the Miller (a one act Scottish comic-drama), and His Last Legs (a one act comedy) - the last two being presented each night after either David Garrick or The Bells.

It has been recorded that this tour by Clay's provided many centres with their first presentation of professionally staged Shakespeare since Bentley last toured the north in 1898 (Maryborough Chronicle 20 Sept. 1909, 2), and indeed, even the Brisbane Courier notes that Shakespearian productions in that city had been at "rare intervals" during that period (6 Sept. 1909, 6) Bentley's performances were routinely praised by the Queensland reviewers, as were Essie Clay's representations. It is believed that after the previous year's tour she undertook private tuition with both the eminent actor/teacher Harry Leston, and one of George Rignold's regular leading actresses, Roland Watts-Phillips. Also taking leading roles in the company were J.B. Atholwood, S.A. Fitzgerald, Johnston Weir and Helen Furgus,⁷⁸ along with Maurice Nodin and Lance Vane. Len Buderick, later engaged as a NSW country circuit manager by Clay, also toured with the company as an actor.



Plate 47

Walter Bentley

(Courtesy of the John Oxley Library, Queensland)

⁷⁸ These four were among the leading local actors of the period, with Atholwood in particular renowned for his work during the previous two decades. Fitzgerald was the father of Jim Gerald and Lance Vane. Weir later became highly involved in the industrial aspects of the theatre industry - notably through his role as Secretary of the NSW Branch of the Australian Actors Federation. Veteran actress Helen Furgus was also the mother of actress Nellie Ferguson.

The tour was managed by Jimmy Boyle, who took the company along the usual coastal itinerary in the wake of the company's specially engaged advance rep, Claude E. Webb.⁷⁹ After heading north by steamer following the Maryborough season, they played Townsville and Charters Towers before returning south through Mackay, Rockhampton, Mt Morgan, Bundaberg and finally Toowoomba. Although considerably successful in terms of critical appraisal and audience numbers, it seems that this was to be Clay's last dramatic company tour of the north. Some two years later, however, he would again act as producer for a Queensland tour, this time easily the biggest production of his career, the massive Stanley McKay pantomime production of Bo-Peep.

Around mid 1911, and in response to the enormous popularity of his Sydney pantomime season over the previous summer holidays, Stanley McKay mounted an extensive Queensland tour under the auspices of Harry Clay's organisation. While many details of this tour remain unearthed it is known that the company, numbering some 38 performers (not including stage crew and labourers), presented several productions beneath a gigantic tent (described as a mining tent), these being Bo-Peep, The Carnival Girls, and The Circus Queen. The cast, which included 20 ballet girls, was headed by Bruce Drysdale, Phyllis Faye, and Vicky Miller (Bo-Peep), while the management was taken care of by McKay (Director), Harry Clay (Producer), Jimmy Boyle (Business Manager) and Walter V. Hobbs (Tour Manager).

Press reviews of the production were unanimous in praising its spectacle, the settings (designed again by Harry Whaite) being "mounted on an elaborate scale" (Northern Miner 19 June 1911, 4). The tent, which seated over 2,000 people, was itself a significant drawcard for the townsfolk of the north - taking several days to erect and dismantle. Promotion throughout the tour insisted that it was the 'largest combination that has yet toured the Commonwealth under mining canvas' (Northern Miner 19 June 1911, 4). But although the costs of running the tour would have been considerable, this tour, unlike that of the Clay/Bentley venture, for example, frequently visited centres away from the large coastal centres. These were mostly mining towns - places such as Chillagoe and Irvinebank in the Cairns Hinterland, and presumably those towns west of Charters Towers, such as Richmond and Hughenden. The Queensland leg of the Bo-Peep tour ended in Mackay, from whence the company made an extraordinarily long journey to the Riverina to make a show date for the start of another NSW tour (McKay 42).

With regard to the reviews of the tour, too, almost all wrote of amazement at the transformation scene "Under the Waves," which concluded the Bo-Peep production - Harry Whaite's brilliant set coming in for special mention. Other reviews, such as that in the Rockhampton Record, found "the beauty, talent and grace of the Bo-Peep ballet... an excellent illustration of the success of Australian womankind" (quoted in the Northern Miner 19 June 1911, 4). Each season would be complimented by one of the other productions,

⁷⁹ Webb is another theatrical showman who established a prominent reputation in later years, most notably in the picture theatre area in Adelaide, managing for many years the York, Strand and Lyric theatres in that city. Some further details are included as part of Appendix E.

presumably to invite those locals who had seen the major presentation to return again - and particularly in light of the presentation of the bevy of chorus girls interspersed within the narrative of these two musical comedies.



Plate 48

Stanley McKay as David Garrick in 1909
(Theatre Aug. 1909, 22)



Plate 49

The Phillip Sisters (L-R: Bessie and Eileen)
Toured QLD in 1914, 1916 and 1917
(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)

The 1911 pantomime tour seems to have been the last of its type to be toured by Harry Clay through Queensland, including dramatic productions. From around 1912 it becomes noticeable that economic conditions were becoming increasingly difficult throughout much the state creating, in turn, problems for Clay's Queensland operations. In response to this situation it appears that he decided to concentrate his energies on the vaudeville tours. Reports such as the following one published in the Theatre indicate,

however, that Clay still believed there was money to be made if the organisation altered its strategies. Writing from Charters Towers on the 12th of May 1912, he notes:

We are still going along our usual way. Business has been just as good as ever. Of course, it's very hard to play the north as the halls are tied up to the picture-people, and if you do get into their halls you have got to pay for it. In Mackay they would not allow me the hall at a reasonable price, with the result that I had to go to a place that was a long walk away from the main street: but our popularity followed us, and we did just as well as we could have done in the popular hall of the town. The company that had the hall did not use it; they played in their open-air place. So we got even with them. Queensland on the whole is improving. It will be a fine country. Of course, one or two mining towns have gone back greatly; but others have come on; so matters are equalised. There is one thing against companies travelling north - the boats are erratic. In many instances they arrive 30 or 40 hours late. The recent strike has done some places a lot of harm; but they will soon recover. You know that Queensland is a great country in recovering from droughts, floods etc (June 1912, 6).

By 1915, with both the war and the drought conditions throughout most of Queensland imposing much hardship on the north, many changes in Clay's itinerary were put in place. The company began visiting a number of towns it had never before played, competing by this stage not only with the social and environmental hardships, but also with the rapidly expanding picture show industry. Halls and theatres once considered Clay's domain were, as he recorded in 1912, now much more difficult to book while in many towns new picture houses were being built, creating a great deal of competition where there had once been very little. As Clay again notes in the September 1915 issue of the Theatre:

George Carroll and E.J. Carroll are blanky good fellows. For one thing, they keep their word - which is more than a lot of the blanks do. Despite the fact that the Queensland halls are mostly engaged by Birch and Carroll they allow me to play there just as I had been doing for years. With more profitable results to themselves they could if they wished, close me out altogether (25).

Early the following year Clay reported on his 1915 tour in the same magazine, declaring that:

Townsville was my best place last year. But my last trip was not on the whole a very good one, because of the drought. One of the places that I found to have suffered most was Ayr. It was going ahead in a wonderful manner; but the want of rain knocked it back terribly (Theatre Jan 1916, 35).

Despite these difficulties business continued to be relatively successful, even during the final two years. Confirming this, for example, is a 1917 review in the Northern Miner (Charters Towers) which notes that "when the curtain was rolled up at the Theatre Royal at 8 o'clock on Saturday night there was not even standing room in the huge auditorium - eloquent testimony of the popularity of this grand old company of entertainers" (4 June 1917, 3).⁸⁰ However, it would be the flu epidemic of 1919 that effectively closed the door on these tours, with Harry Clay most probably deciding that his Sydney circuit offered greater returns

⁸⁰ An indication of the audience size at this venue suggests, then, a crowd in excess of 1,200 - this being the seating capacity of the Theatre Royal ("To Theatrical Companies" 2).

by this time. And indeed, it would be nine years before his company mounted another tour of the north, this time most likely an attempt to keep the company's then flagging business afloat.

Some two years after Clay's death in 1925 the company, now under the stewardship of Maurice Chenoweth and the financial control of Clay's partners Abbot and Morgan, the company instigated a return tour of its Queensland tours in an apparent effort to stimulate its declining fortunes. In this regard the decision to tour a company with the headline act of Nellie Kolle was seemingly a good one - the reviews of the tour being highly positive. By now, however, the tide of change had well and truly turned against vaudeville, placing Clay's in an almost impossible position. The company's fight for survival against both the film industry and the economic climate in Sydney was difficult enough. But in addition a great many country centres had also taken to the talkies (almost always at the expense of live theatre). The combination of much higher expenses, smaller audiences, and the general downturn in interest for vaudeville itself had therefore severely handicapped vaudeville companies like Clay's. The Kolle tour was, then, most probably a chance to test an alternative to the situation the company now found itself in.

The Nellie Kolle tour was again managed by Wally Edwards, who would have been by now well into his late fifties. Despite the length of time between tours, interest in the return of Clay's was apparently quite high, there still being many people who had regularly attended the shows in previous years. A number of changes, however, were brought into play - no doubt in an attempt to make the programmes more contemporary. Instead of touring with only a piano as accompaniment, for instance, the management utilised the services of their own jazz band. Gone, too, were the farces and revues of yesteryear, replaced instead by short musical comedies. On the other hand, Clay's philosophy of complete changes to each night's programme, low admission prices,⁸¹ and a highly entertaining bill of artists, was very much in evidence.

Kolle, herself, made quite an impression throughout the tour, her impersonations and piano work in particular coming in for much praise. One critic wrote: "Her mastery of the piano is perhaps her greatest talent. Her touch is sure and firm and the result of this all too rare gift is a clarity in the music which makes it a treat to listen to" (Toowoomba Chronicle 19 Mar. 1927, 5). Others on the tour who came in for special mention were American comic Bessie Lester, dancing violinist Sydney Clarke, and Julian the French cartoon artist billed as "the Komedy Kartoontist."

It is not known for certain whether Clay's sent any other tours through Queensland under Harry Clay's name before the company folded in 1929. Victoria Chance in the Companion to Australian Theatre indicates that Roy Rene toured the state for the company in mid-1929, just days after his marriage to Sadie Gale (Philip Parsons 485). As previously mentioned in Chapter Three, research for this thesis has not been able to

⁸¹ The general admission price seems to have been 2/- and 1/- (with children 6d at the Saturday matinees). In the far northern centres the more exclusive seats, reached prices of 4/4, and 3/3. However, 2/- and 1/- seats were always available.

establish through any primary sources whether this tour had indeed been underwritten by Clay's, although this was quite possibly the case. It is known that both Rene and Gale had been on the Clay circuit from around April of that year, with their own company the Merry Monarchs (formed after Rene's final split with Nat Phillips in 1928). The troupe, which initially included Amy Rochelle, is known to have provided full shows at the Gaiety Theatre during this time in addition to Rene's own solo work. While there is no mention of Clay's in any advertising found for the Queensland tour so far, it is quite likely that the company did indeed underwrite and organise the tour - particularly as Rene was apparently in no financial position to do so himself.⁸²

Relying heavily on Mo's reputation, the company's advertising often simply announced "Mo, Mo, Mo," with Gale's name also in bold print. References to the Merry Monarchs, however, were generally deferred in favour of Mo's Merrymakers. By all accounts the tour was successful in terms of audience numbers - this being likely as the reputations of the two principal members had reached the far north "long before their arrival" (Morning Bulletin 23 Sept. 1929, 3). Fred Parsons in A Man Called Mo records that the tour only covered North Queensland. Parson's also records that "Mo was unfavourably compared with George Wallace, who had once cut cane up there for a living" (27).⁸³

After playing the major centres, with seasons quite a deal longer than any of Clay's previous Queensland tours, the company returned to Sydney towards the end of the year, at which time Rene signed on for Frank Neil's revue Clowns in Clover, in Melbourne. He collapsed on stage one night during this production and was rushed to hospital with peritonitis, the result being that he was kept off stage for some six months. The end of 1929 also saw the virtual collapse of Clay's vaudeville company, with its headquarters leased out to Harry Kitching, and the Sydney circuit all but disbanded. Harry Clay's proud record of achievement in Queensland, which until now has gone unrecognised by theatre historians, will stand. It is likely that no vaudeville, nor possibly any other theatrical company before or after his, has been able to service the state on such a regular basis with such acclaim and popularity, and for such an unbroken period. As the Queensland

Times of 12 July 1909 records - a statement typical of the comments published throughout the first eighteen years of tours at least:

Amongst the many entertainers that visit Ipswich none are more welcome than Clay's Waxworks and Company, who are unanimously regarded as the finest travellers' organisation of the kind yet seen... (4).

⁸² In the 31 July issue of Everyone's that year, Rene was reported to have told a court - as part of the divorce proceedings from his first wife - that he and Gale only "received £70 weekly on their present contract with Clay's." Rene also expressed the fear that when his contract finished with Clay's "there would be difficulty finding remunerative employment because of the talkies" (39).

⁸³ A Man Called Mo is largely unreliable in its account of Rene's early years (including his Stiffy and Mo period) and hence any references should be treated with caution (see "What Oh Tonight" thesis for further details).



Plate 50

Nellie Kolle as the principle boy in Bluebeard
(Fullers) 1922
(Courtesy of the Fryer Library)

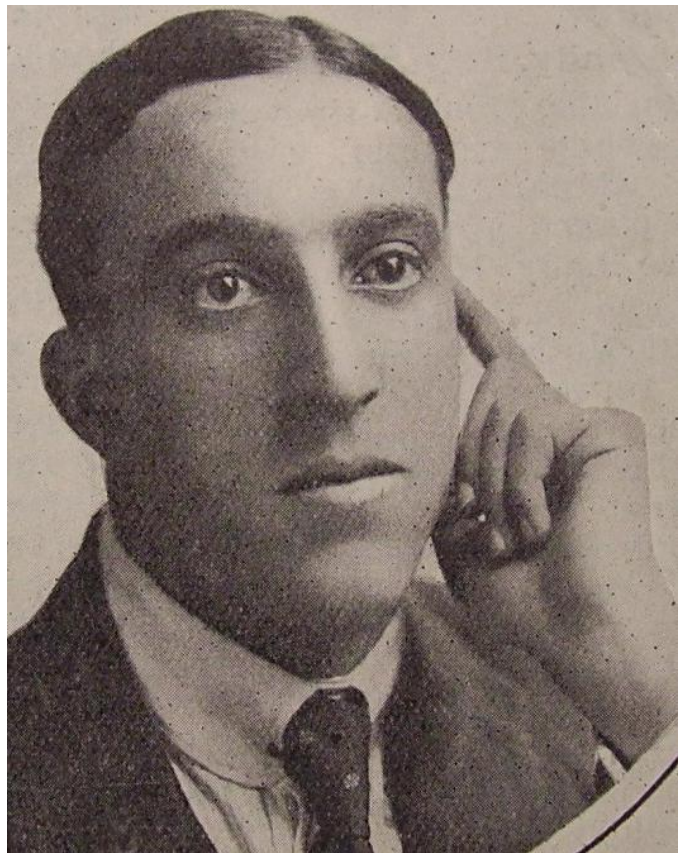


Plate 51

Roy Rene 1915
(Theatre Apr. 1915, 35)

CONCLUSION

"HARRY CLAY: A CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE"

"Vale, Harry Clay"

Vale, old chief, we'll miss your cheery smile,
Your repartee that would oft beguile;
The hearty grip, that lent a helping hand,
For those that knew you best - can understand
Australian "Mummers" mourn your loss and vow
You placed them first - to your memory we bow;
You lived - and died - Australians know your work,
Actor or not, the whitest man on earth.

(Reg. M. Thornton 34)

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this dissertation's focus on Harry Clay's Australian vaudeville career and the role he played in the production of popular theatre in Australia has been a three-fold historical examination. First, it has collected and presented documentary evidence which supports the argument that Clay was one of the three entrepreneurs to have dominated the Australian vaudeville industry from its emergence out of minstrelsy around the turn of the century to its eventual demise in the late 1920s. Second, it has traced Clay's life and career from his birth and early years as a popular minstrel tenor whose reputation was widely acknowledged throughout much of Australia, through to his death in 1925 and the final years of his Sydney based vaudeville and theatrical company. The third area of examination has provided an historical insight into the minstrel/vaudeville era in the decades which spanned the turn of the century, a period in which these forms of variety entertainment enjoyed their greatest popularity.

With regard to Clay himself, it has been argued that his achievement in providing regular employment opportunities for several thousand artists (many of whom maintained long-term associations with his company) over the significant period of time he operated has presented the most compelling argument for his inclusion in the annals of Australian theatre history. While his operations were generally regarded as being of the B circuit class, and his regional tours did not cover as much of Australia or New Zealand as did Harry Rickards and the Fullers, his comparatively substantial career was in no small way the result of his own high standards, work ethics, and reputation as a generous and conscientious manager. Indeed, his contemporaries were fully aware of his influence, particularly when his company established its dominance over the entertainment practices of Sydney's suburban audiences and the country centres of Queensland. Furthermore, the idea that Clay's was simply a repository for second rate entertainers has been shown to be incorrect. His influence upon the careers of a number of well-known Australian performers has been

identified, as has the fact that he regularly engaged top-line and/or overseas attractions for his circuits when they came off contract with the Tivoli and Fuller organisations.

In comparison to all the other B circuit competitors based in Sydney (and quite possibly throughout Australia), too, it has been shown that Clay's company was able to maintain its business operations continuously for almost thirty years, despite the many difficulties that occurred within the social and industrial fabric of the early twentieth century. His ability to adapt, re-direct, expand and contract his business when required saw him succeed where many others failed. And in doing so he was able to provide not only a regular and reliable work network for Australian performers, his many employees, and the various support industries; but he also presented regular and quality entertainment to audiences who were either infrequently serviced, or ignored by the other leading companies over those three decades. Further to this, the locations (whether city or regional) and social classes (particularly suburban audiences) that Clay targetted generally had very little access to quality vaudeville apart from those offered by him, and indeed were all too often presented with shows by small-time operators or one-off companies whose production values and standards could be considered as having matched their reputations.

As noted in Chapter One, the difficulties involved in being able to locate personal details concerning popular entertainers and entrepreneurs during Harry Clay's era are compounded by the doubtful accuracy of those records which have been found. These sources were to a large extent accessed from within advertising material, performance reviews, and industry gossip. It is for this reason that I have attempted to support and correct such information by presenting a variety of alternative sources; for example, Deceased Estate Files, Council Minutes, legal documents, directories and other non-industry and archival materials. This thesis has not, however, denied the relevance of the less-concrete or even fabricated representations, with these being considered to some extent as a reflection of the subject's audience - how he both wished to be seen and recognised by the public who patronised his entertainments, and in turn how he believed they wanted to interpret his persona.

As well as the unreliability of many historical sources, it has also been the argument of this thesis that the oversight with regard to Harry Clay's position in Australian theatre history has occurred partly because of his own business practices, and as a result of both the generally ephemeral nature of vaudeville's performances, and the everydayness of vaudeville as a cultural practice itself. As this thesis has shown, Clay did not utilise large scale or expensive publicity throughout much of his company's lifetime, but instead utilised the benefits of regularity by servicing established locations on a weekly basis in addition to word of mouth promotion and alternative/less expensive options – i.e. posting daybills in each area, and having children drop dodgers into the local letterboxes. As a result of these practices, however, the amount of readily accessed material for historical research purposes has been severely limited.

While it is true that Clay did utilise newspaper advertising for his country circuits and suburban shows, in Sydney it seems that this type of advertising was mostly published in the Sydney Morning Herald and not the suburban newspapers (hence a wider coverage with less expense). Consequently, detailed accounts of his work in particular suburbs are mostly unavailable. Reviews of his shows in the Herald also rarely occur, for as the Theatre notes in one of its earliest editions, "the critics on our daily papers write their notices according to the size of the advertisement in their respective papers" (15 July 1903, 8). Unfortunately it seems that the Theatre magazine was also guilty of such practice, for as previously mentioned, Harry Clay received almost no acknowledgment within its pages until he began advertising in 1909. Clay's initial reluctance to advertise in these magazines can be seen, however, as a response to his public, the majority of whom were working-class and who generally could not afford to subscribe to the trade journals of the period. Thus mention of him or his operations in such journals is almost non-existent until such time as he did begin to advertise.

Another consideration, too, is the fact that there were few musical or radio recordings of Australian artists during much of this period, while today there is only a limited store of early film which has survived. It can be argued that both of these aspects have been part of the problem in being able to locate physical records pertaining to Harry Clay and other artists and managers of his era - and have thus contributed to many of them being overlooked by historians. With no material of this kind available most of those performers (and their acts) who were among the elite of their profession during this period, but whose careers ended around the same time as vaudeville's demise, have ended up more or less anonymous. For example, in comparison to several of their contemporaries whose careers stretched on into the late 1930s and 1940s - people such as Roy Rene, George Wallace and George Sorlie - acclaimed performers and entrepreneurs like Amy Rochelle, Stanly McKay, Bert Le Blanc and Arthur Morley have been denied a place in Australian theatrical history.

It is only because of the lack of information, however, that these earlier pioneers of twentieth century popular culture remain unrecognised for the important and influential roles they played in the society of the period. Hence this thesis has sought to re-situate the position of one such person, Harry Clay, within the history of Australian theatre - and in particular examine his role as a leading figure in the development and maintenance of the most popular form of entertainment during his era.

In conclusion, then, this thesis has presented a case for Harry Clay's greater inclusion within the historical records of this country's theatrical traditions and accomplishments. His influential role in supporting Australian performers in an era and within an industry previously dominated by imported artists, is perhaps his most significant contribution. It is also a contribution marked by his desire to service audiences which were not a priority to the larger and more stylish organisations - these being the working-class, suburban, NSW and Queensland country audiences. While it can be argued that his interest was undoubtedly one

motivated by profit, he in return succeeded in offering the public what they wanted – "quality entertainment at popular prices."



Plate 52

From the Newtown Diamond Jubilee Souvenir: 1862-1922

S.D. Smith compiler

(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW)

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MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS

ARG:	Argus (Melbourne)
AV:	Australian Variety and Show World
BC:	Brisbane Courier, The.
B:	Bulletin, The.
BM:	Bundaberg Mail
C:	Capricornian, The. (Rockhampton)
CNE:	Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder
CP:	Cairns Post. (see also Cairns Morning Post - CMP)
DB:	Daily Bulletin (Rockhampton)
DM:	Daily Mercury (Mackay)
DM/S:	Daily Mirror
E:	Everyone's
GR:	Green Room
GT:	Gympie Times.
JI:	Just It. [previously The Theatre]
K:	Kino (The Australian Cinema and Theatre Society)
LM:	Lithgow Mercury
MBC:	Maryborough Chronicle
MC:	Mackay Chronicle (becomes Daily Mercury in 1906)
MDM:	Maitland Daily Mercury
NC:	Newtown Chronicle and MacDonalddown, Marrackville, St Peters, Enmore and Glebe Argus. (1899-1907)
NM:	Northern Miner (Charters Towers)
NP:	The News (Perth)
NQR:	North Queensland Register
NS:	North Shore and Manly Times
NZIM:	New Zealand Illustrated Magazine.
NSWF:	N.S.W. Freemason, The.
QT:	Queensland Times, The.
SSD:	Sand's Sydney Directory. (1873-1933)
SMH:	Sydney Morning Herald.
TC:	Toowoomba Chronicle.
TDB:	Townsville Daily Bulletin
TN	Tamworth News and Liverpool and Gwyder Districts Advertiser

TT: Theatre, The. (Sydney 1905-1926) aka Theatre Magazine/ Theatre, Society and Home (ca. 1925). Becomes Just It (1926)

WC: Western Champion. (Barcaldine)

WWE: Wagga Wagga Express

ARCHIVES, LIBRARY, HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS

ASC: Australian Securities Commission (Searches Counter)

AAR: Australian Army Records (Soldier Career Management Agency)

GSQ: Genealogical Society of Queensland

FFH: Forbes Family History Group, Inc

FL: Fryer Library (University of Queensland)

JO: John Oxley Library (State Library of Queensland)

ML: Mitchell Library

QRA: Queensland Railways Archives

SGA: N.S.W. State Government Archives

SL: N.S.W. State Library

SLNS: Stanton Library, North Sydney Council (Oral History Collection)

STQ: State Library of Queensland

SCA: Sydney City Council Archives

UQ: University of Queensland Library



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

**Harry Clay and Clay's Vaudeville Company,
1865 - 1930:
An Historical and Critical Survey**

APPENDICES

Revised Edition

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts

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OUR ONLY ADDRESS —
GEO. C. ST
 — 5-WAYS CORNER, C

THEATRE ROYAL.

FOR A SHORT SEASON ONLY,
 commencing

To-Night !

To-Night !

Harry (CLAY'S) Harry

NEW COMPANY.

15th—ANNUAL TOUR—15th.

15— STAR ARTISTS—15

In Everything New and Up-to-date.

All the Latest Ragtime Successes.

Come and see the TANGO danced
 as it should be danced.

ADMISSION AS USUAL.

MR. WALLY EDWARDS,
 Manager.

MONKLAND CONVENT SCHOOL.

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APPENDIX A

HARRY CLAY'S VAUDEVILLE COMPANY

SURVEY OF ARTISTS, MANAGERS, PARTNERS AND EMPLOYEES: 1901-1929

NB: An updated and revised version of this Appendix is included in Clay Djubal's 2005 Ph D thesis "What Oh Tonight." See <http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:107238> (Appendix H). That version includes several hundred new entries. The list is also regularly updated in the Australian Variety Theatre Archive. See: <http://ozvta.com/research-lists/>

The following list has been compiled during the course of research undertaken for this dissertation. While every attempt has been made to locate the names and information regarding artists and employees engaged by Harry Clay's organisation during the period 1901 to 1929, it must be conceded that the greater portion of this list has been compiled from available sources between the years 1914 and 1925. As discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, there was little in the way of advertising or magazine reviews concerning Harry Clay's operations during the years 1901-1913, other than in relation to the NSW/Qld tours reported in various country newspapers. While these sources have provided the survey with data concerning the tours, it is likely that many more artists were employed during those years. This situation, too, has caused some confusion as to whether several leading entertainers during this period, artists such as Jim Gerald and Clyde Cook,¹ for example, were or were not associated with Clay's. Research for this thesis has so far failed to locate any definite primary evidence to support the claims that these two performers were engaged by Clay, and hence they have been left out of the survey.

It should be noted, too, that between 1901 and 1905 Clay would only operate a circuit in Sydney during the off-tour periods (approximately September to February). From 1906 onwards the number of artists employed by Clay's would have risen significantly as Clay had by then stopped touring himself, and was to maintain at least one, and sometimes two circuits in Sydney at the same time as his Queensland tours (apart from 1911 and 1912). In the years following Clay's death, vaudeville's decline is noticeable in the ever decreasing space afforded it in the theatrical magazines. Hence the much lower amount of data for the years 1925-1929. Only the Fuller and Tivoli circuits, along with the more significant artists such as Jim Gerald, George Sorlie, George Wallace and Roy Rene, maintained any semblance of coverage by comparison with previous years. Compounding this lack of information is the fact that there is seldom any more than one or two mentions of artists engaged by the company included in any one issue of those magazines. Furthermore, by 1928 Clay's do not appear to have advertised in any of the publications they had previously used.

The major sources used for this survey, and which pertain to the period 1914 - 1925 are notably: The Theatre Magazine, Just It, Australian Variety and Show World, Everyone's, Lithgow Mercury, Wagga Wagga Express, and the Cessnock Eagle. The information has been accessed largely from reviews in the theatrical magazines, and from advertising in the regional newspapers. With regard to the latter, for example, it has been possible to locate particulars regarding the artists on any of Clay's NSW circuits during the period 1916-1918 through a comprehensive search of one newspaper (i.e. Lithgow Mercury), as each of the four touring companies worked in Lithgow on a monthly rotational basis. Again, the early years of the third decade have been accessed through a comprehensive survey of the Hunter circuit, via the Cessnock Eagle. While there may, of course be some slippage, this is thought to be of a relatively small nature.

Information regarding artists touring Queensland during the years 1901-1918, 1927 and 1929 has been taken from several regional newspapers, particularly the Toowoomba Chronicle, Northern Miner, Queensland Times, Gympie Times, and Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton). Information has also been provided through less comprehensive searches through the Maitland Mercury and Tamworth Advertiser. The reason for checking more than just one or two papers relates to the fact that Harry Clay almost always changed part of the touring company for its return visit (usually around Townsville/Charters Towers), and frequently increased the company for the NSW sections (sometime through the presentation of a musical band, rather than the usual piano accompaniment).

¹ References to Jim Gerald having been associated with Harry Clay have been made by various people over the years. My research, however, has so far failed to find a primary source to confirm these claims. While it is possible that Gerald worked for Clay's (his father S.A. Fitzgerald, wife Essie Jennings and brother Lance Vane did) he has been left out of this survey because of the lack of evidence. Further to this, Gerald, in an interview for Everyone's in 1928, states that he had been with Fullers "for the last 16 years, including a break of three years which he spent at the war," and is known to have spent two years under Stanley McKay's management doing pantomime - much of it on the Fullers' circuit (ca.1914-16). Prior to this he had made his mark as a circus performer. Gerald also records, "I started with the Fullers and I'll finish with them" (22 Feb. 1928, 46). Any engagements with Clay's, then, would have been brief, and probably would have had to have been around the years 1914-16. Clyde Cook, too, has been mentioned as having work for Clay's. While Cook has recalled several vaudeville managements he worked for over the years, including J.C. Bain, (and most likely during Bain's period at the Coliseum, Nth Sydney) at no stage within these interviews has he referred to any association with Harry Clay.

The information in this survey consists of the following, and in the same order:

1. **"A" circuit engagements:** Those artists known to have been engaged for the A circuit organisations in Australia - that is, Harry Rickards' Tivoli organisation and the Fuller Brothers' circuit, are indicated by an asterisk { * } immediately preceding the stage/act name.
2. **Stage name of act/artist:** Presented in alphabetical order according to act name or surname, and in bold print. Those acts with names beginning with numbers (e.g. The Three Stars) are ordered according to the surname or descriptive name, not the number. Thus "The Three Stars" are found under "Stars, The Three." In the same way, acts with names beginning with titles such as "Musical, Aerial," "Sisters," etc (as in "The Musical Shirleys") are presented under the surname or descriptive name. In this example look for "Shirleys, The Musical." The exception to this, however, is if the name ends with a number (as in the Harmony Four). In these cases search for the act under the descriptive title first - (e.g. "Harmony Four, The") Those acts without a surname (e.g. "Little Daisy" or "Wee Willie") are located according to the start of the name (e.g. "W" for "Wee" and "L" for "Little"). Acts with alternate names (e.g. Reg Thornton, aka The Kangaroosta) will have both names included, but with information presented only under one name. Therefore, a search for "Kangaroosta" will indicate that you should look under "Thornton, Reg" for more details. Any acts with confusing aspects to their names will likewise have two inclusions, one pointing to the other.
3. **Name and number of artists/nationality:** Information (if known) regarding the real names of performers, their nationality (if foreign), and the number of artists known to be included in the act. This information is presented in brackets [].
4. **Type of act:** If known, the type of act, or a description, is included. Multiple disciplines are separated by a slash { / }. For example: singer/comic/ball puncher/circuit manager.
5. **Years known to have been engaged by Clay's:** This information is presented in parentheses (). The almost impossible task of establishing exact periods of employment has meant that only the years can be included, as engagements could vary from a week to twelve months. Only those years that have been established through primary sources have been included. Thus, while some artists have worked for Clay's over several years, if any single or multiple years are missing (for example: 1915-17, 1919-20, leaving a vacant period for 1918) these gaps are still indicated, despite the probability that they were engaged during that period. Some exceptions to an exact yearly establishment of dates occurs, however, as with the case of Thea Rowe, who has recalled her employment with Clay's during the 1920s in a Stanton Library Oral History interview, but for whom there has been no other primary source to prove this. In these cases a general or approximate time period has been indicated, (e.g. early 1920s). In those cases where an employee or manager is believed to have worked on with the company, but for whom there are no records to indicate the time period, the end date is left open (e.g. 1914 -).

The dates indicated in parentheses do not relate to any other information, such as length of partnerships or career span of an act. Such information, if deemed necessary, is provided later, (see Significant/miscellaneous information).
6. **NSW/QLD tours:** If an artist or employee has been engaged to tour the NSW/Qld circuit between 1901-1918, 1927 and/or 1929, then this information is recorded. Tours such as the 1908 Dramatic Co tour, 1909 Walter Bentley tour, or 1911 Stanley McKay pantomime tour are also indicated.
7. **Significant/miscellaneous information:** Information regarding partnerships, marriages, previous engagements, family relationships, overseas tours, or years engaged by Clays as managers etc is included. This information is preceded by a dash { - }.

NOTES:

- Spellings: Variations in the spelling of names occur quite frequently in reviews and advertisements. Whenever possible, the most often used spelling is recorded. If any doubt remains alternative spellings will be included as part of each inclusion.
- Doubling up of names: There are a number of instances in which similar names are recorded, but for whom, there are no records to establish a connection. In such cases both are noted separately, and with no reference establishing any relationship. For example, there are records for both The Renos (1919) and The Reno Brothers Jazz Band (1925), but I have as yet been unable to establish if they are the same act.
- Same names of acts, but years apart: On several occasions I have found acts or performers with the same name, but with quite a number of years separating them. And in many of these cases I have again been unable to find any indications as to whether they are the same or a different act, or even the same act but with some personnel changes. In such instances they are treated as separate acts.
- Similar surnames of individuals to those in partnerships or acts, but which can't be confirmed as the same person/people. In these situations I have left the individuals separate from the act. For example, Jean Carlton (1920) , Harry Carlton (1917) and Carlton Duo (1922)

ABBREVIATIONS

AV:	Australian Variety	Prod:	Producer
B Mngr:	Business Manager	S Mngr:	Stage Manager
IS:	Illustrated Songs	T Mngr:	Tour manager
M Dir:	Music Director	TT:	The Theatre (Magazine)
NBT:	Newtown Bridge Theatre.	aka:	Also known as
NZ:	New Zealand	arta:	Also referred to as

- ABBOTT:** Magician (1916) - Billed as "The Merry Wizard."
- ABBOTT, A. R.:** [Archibald Robert Abbott] Business partner/NBT Secretary and Treasurer. (ca.1901 -)
- * **ABDY, HARRY:** Animal trainer/act (1914, 1922-25) Owned a farm at Lidcombe. Troupe incl. cats, pigeons, dogs, parrots, kangaroos. Abdy was the first to introduce boxing kangaroos to both the Tivoli and America. Brother of Marie La Varre. His father, Mons. Abdy, previously ran carnivals in Australia and NZ.
- * **ABDY AND NORMAN:** [Harry Abdy and Charles Norman] (1925)
- * **ABDY'S CIRCUS:** [see Abdy, Harry] Aka Abdy's Bird and Animal Circus / Marvelle, 1920 / Harry Abdy's Komedy Kangaroos, ca.1927.
- ADAMS, SID:** Titanic survivor/speaker (1914)
- ADELE, MARIE:** Saxophone (1915)
- ADRIAN'S DOGS AND MONKEYS:** (1924)
- AHUD DUO, THE:** Hawaiian songs/dances/specialties (1926)
- AINES, WILL:** (1916)
- AINSLEY, JOE:** Singer (1921) Known for ragtime melodies.
- ALANNAH, EILEEN:** (1922)
- * **ALBERTO, ARTHUR:** Magician (1917, 1921) Billed as "the gay deceiver."
- * **ALBERTS, ARTHUR:** Eccentric comedian (1902, 1904, 1917, 1920-21) NSW/Qld Tours: 1902, 1904.
- ALDOUS, ALMA:** Dancer (1917-18) Appeared with George Wallace Revue Co, ca. 1924.
- * **ALDOUS, IVY:** (1917-18) Also partnered Fred Keely, as Keely and Aldous from ca.1919 onwards. Keely and Aldous appeared with the Harry Burgess Revue Company ca.1919.
- ALFIE:** (1927)
- ALFONSO:** Acrobat/trick cyclist (1916-17) Billed as "the man on the wheel."
- * **ALI ZOBERAD TRIO:** Eastern contortionists/acrobats (1925)
- ALLEN, MADGE:** New Zealand singer (1926)
- ALLGOOD AND SMART:** Novelty jugglers (1919, 1922)
- ALLNER, AMY:** See Ethel Scott and Amy Allner.
- * **ALROY GIRLS, THE:** [Nellie and Lily] Series/dancers (1916-17) Lily Alroy aka Lilian Bilton.
- * **ALWYNNE, MARJORIE:** Contralto (1920)
- ALWYNN DUO, THE:** (1917, 1924)
- * **AMBROSE, MOLLY:** Soubrette (1915, 1917-18, 1921)
- AMOUR BROTHERS, THE:** (1922-23)
- ANDERSON, RAE:** (1915)
- ANDERSON, TED:** (1915)
- * **ANDERSONS, THE AERIAL:** Trapeze act (1927)
- ANDERSON TRIO, THE:** (1910, 1914)
- ANGELO, GIO:** (ca.1915)
- ANNESLIE AND FERNANDO:** [Jack Anderson and Cecil Fernando] (1921) Billed as "the Fighting Midgets."
- * **ARCHER, JOE:** (1909-10, 1917-18, 1922-23)
- ARDEL, ?:** (1910)
- ARIZONA WILLIE:** (1917) Aka "Arizona Billy."
- ARMITAGE:** (1925)
- * **ARNOLD AND NORMAN:** [Tom "Chic" Arnold and Charles Norman] (1923-25)
- * **ARNOLD, TOM:** Comic/patter/revues (1922-25)
- * **ARTEEN, JACK:** Juvenile instructor/pantomime writer (1919-20) Writer/children's director of *The Golden Butterfly* NBT 1919-20. Father of Maudie Arteen / operated a teaching studio in King St, Newtown.
- * **ARTEENS, THE:** Acrobats, who worked with a dog (1915-18, 1920) Little Maudie (Arteen) and Daphne Hill, plus the dog, Jessie, billed as an educational dog. Maudie and Daphne appeared with the Six Hintons, ca.1919.

- ARTHUR FRED:** (1919)
- * **ARTHUR HELMSLEY REVUE TROUPE:** (1925) - see also Brull and Helmsley.
 - ARTISTIQUES, THE TWO:** Song and paper devices act (1925)
 - * **ARTOIS, THE:** Acrobats (1921) Comprised man, girl small child.
 - ASHLEYS, THE:** Equilibrists (1926)
 - * **ASHMAN, BERTHA:** Singer (1910, 1914, 1916)
 - ASHTON, ETHEL:** (1914)
 - ASHTON, STELLA:** Trapeze artist (1917) Aka Mdle. Ashton.
 - ASTELLS, THE:** Balancing act (1915)
 - * **ASTON, CHARLES:** Singer (1926) Ex Carl Rosa Opera Co, "the oldest operatic organisation in the Empire."
 - * **ASTONS, THE:** English equilibrists/acrobats (1917-20) Aka The Aston Brothers. Described in 1917 as a "dental athletic act."
 - ASTOR:** (1926) Also worked with Smart Set Diggers.
 - ASTRA AND SYLVESTER:** Animal act (1920) Aka Mysterious Astra and Sylvester. Animals incl. lion cubs and a panther.
 - ATHENIANS, THE:** (1915)
 - * **ATHOLWOOD, JAMES B:** Actor (1909) Engaged for Walter Bentley Qld tour.
 - ATLANTA GIRLS, THE:** Singers/dancers/contortionists/acrobats (1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1927.
 - ATTILA:** Artistic posing (1926) Known as "the white statue."
 - ATILLAS, THE:** Heavyweight juggling/Roman rings/posing (1914)
 - AUDREY, PRISCILLA:** (1921)
 - AUFANDON:** (1920) Billed as "the upside down man," who worked with a "hideous dummy."
 - AUSSIE GIRLS, THE:** (1921-22) Aka The Three Aussies.
 - AUSTRALIAN FOUR, THE:** (1916)
 - AUSTIN AND COWAN:** (1915)
 - * **AUSTRAL TRIO, THE:** [Bert Corrie, Doris Baker, Joe Verne] (1916) Not to be confused with The Australs (classical music troupe/quartette).
- BABY DOLLS, THE:** [See The Four Baby Dolls]
- BABY MAY:** Dancer (1919) - Appeared in *Toyland*, 1919, aged three.
- BABY ROSE:** Contortionist (1925) Aka the 'Jointless Doll'.
- BABY LORNA:** (1922)
- * **BAILEY'S POSING DOGS AND SHEEP:** [Ted Bailey] (1921)
 - * **BAIN, JAMES C:** Comic/entrepreneur (1917) "Bain's Vaudeville Co" at the National Amphitheatre / North Sydney Coliseum / Princess Theatre (as Fullers' Manager). One-time General Manager for James Brennan ca.1910.
 - * **BAKER, DORIS:** Comedian/singer/dancer (1910, 1916-17, 1919) Also worked with Bert Corrie as Corrie and Baker/Austral Trio.
 - * **BAKER, IVY:** Singer/dancer (1919-22)
 - BALL, NELLIE:** (1922)
 - BALLANTO:** Balancing act (1919)
 - * **BALMUS:** [Walter Wheatley] Strongman. (1921) See also Fullers, 1920; Tivoli, 1921; toured USA, ca.1921. Ex Victorian teacher of Physical Culture / high diver / champion swimmer.
 - * **BALTO:** [Max Balto] Equilibrist (1916-17, 1920, 1924) Aka Daredevil Balto. Toured South Africa, India, East Indies, Philippines ca.1918-19.
 - * **BANBURY TROUPE, THE:** Acrobats. (1921) A collaboration of well-known performers specialising in an up-to-date version of *The Chinese Laundry* (c1921)
 - BARBERINO AND HER LITTLE PAL:** (1925)
 - * **BARCLAY:** Magician (1924) Specialised in bullet catching.
 - BARCLAY SISTERS, THE:** [Doris and Verlie] (1914-15) Aka The Barclay Kids.
 - * **BARCLAY, VERLIE:** Pianist (1917) Music director with Dix-Baker, 1918.
 - BARLING, MORRY:** (1928) Aka Maurice Barling (ex-Barling and Dale)
 - BARLOW, J:** Actor (1914) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, NBT.
 - BARNARD, JOHN:** Baritone (1914)
 - BARNARD SISTERS:** (1916)
 - BARNES, UNA:** (1922)
 - BARNES AND BARNES:** (1916-17)
 - BARNETT, LITTLE THELMA:** Singer (1918)
 - * **BARNSLEY, EILEEN:** Soprano (1914, 1920-21) - wife of Charlie Melvin. Toured New Zealand 1917-20.

- BARTLETT:** Instrumentalist (1920)
- * **BARON, ARTHUR:** English ventriloquist (1916-17)
- BARON, FRED:** (1916)
- BARON'S GNOMES:** (1916)
- BARON STEVENS AND IT:** (1917)
- BARRACLOUGH, ERNEST:** (1922)
- BARRAN, HARRY:** Vocalist (1917)
- BARRINGTON, JACK:** Baritone/whistler (1916)
- BARRY, JAMES PATRICK:** Scottish entertainer (1915)
- BARTON, ADDIE:** (1917)
- * **BARTON, BERT:** English comic/straightman (1917, 1921, 1925-26) Played the Dame in pantomimes / also known to have acted as S Mngr and Dir. with other companies. Appeared with Claude Dampier's Co, 1924.
- BARUM:** Aerial artist (1915)
- BATES & WADE:** Athletes and hand balancers (1915-16)
- * **BATES, ELSIE:** Sketch artist (1915, 1917-18) Married to Arthur Morley, whom she also partnered on stage. Appeared with Royal Musical Comedy Co, 1915.
- * **BATES, LES:** Comic (1914, 1916) Aka Little Leslie Bates "the Mayor of Tiny Town."
- BAXTER, GRACE:** (1918)
- BEATTIE AND VAL:** (1922)
- * **BEAUMONT, BERTHA:** (1920)
- BEAUMONT, IVY: [see Ivy Bowman]
- BEAVER, HERBERT:** Comic juggler/monologist (1921-22) See also Campbell and Beaver.
- * **BECK, IKE:** Vaudeville entrepreneur/comic (1918-19) Described in 1918 as making a re-appearance with Clay's.
- BELLE, FLORA:** (1922-23)
- * **BELLORA:** Bird and animal mimic (1915-16, 1921) Appeared in *The Bunyip* (Fuller's, 1916).
- BENNETT, PEGGY:** M Dir. (1918-20)
- BENNS, BERT:** [Herbert] (1921-22)
- BENSON, VERA:** (1918)
- BENTLEY, ADA:** (1920)
- BENTLEY, WALTER:** Actor/teacher/elocutionist/public speaker (1909) Lead actor in Clay's Qld Dramatic Company tour, 1909.
- BERINI :** Comedy cartoonist (1926)
- BERNARDS, THE TWO:** (1916)
- BEROMONT, JOY:** Serio/dancer (1914) NSW/Qld tour: 1914.
- BERTO:** Trapeze. (1921)
- BERTOLLO, MILLIE:** Singer (1914)
- BEST, PEARL:** Actress (1908) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908.
- BESTO:** (1921)
- BETTS, BILLY:** (1919)
- BIG ERMAKOU: [see Ermakou, Zacaree]
- BILLO AND HIS LITTLE BIT OF FLUFF:** (1926)
- BILLY AND DORIS** (1921)
- BILLY THE WONDER BOY:** Ventriloquist/comic/patter/singer (1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1927
- * **BILTON, LILIAN:** [aka Lily Alroy] Singer/dancer (1919, 1921-22) See also The Alroy Girls. Appeared with Phyllis Faye in Manila (Philippines), 1919.
- BINNS AND ALMA:** Sketch artists and specialty act (1929) Engaged for Mo's Merrymakers Qld Tour.
- BISHOP, FRED:** (1920-21)
- BLACK, BERT:** (1917)
- * **BLACK, ELTON:** Comedian/impersonator/revue company producer (1916, 1928) Elton Black Revue Co. Toured with wife, the actress/manager Kate Howarde, ca.1914-15.
- * **BLACK AND WHITE DUO, THE:** [Iris Mancer and Avol McKeller] Juvenile dancers/character impersonations (1916-19) Iris Mancer, see also Gaiety Six.
- BLACK AND WHITE KEWPIE KIDS, THE:** (1920)
- * **BLACKIE, AMY:** Descriptive singer. (1905) NSW/Qld tour: 1905. Appeared with Harry Clay in the late 1800s. Engaged for Alhambra Theatre with Frank Clark's Co, 1889 onwards. Wife of Wal Cottier and mother-in-law of Charles Zoli. Blackie died in November 1917.
- BLACKLER, J:** Actor (1908) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908.
- BLAKE, TEDDY:** (1916)
- BLANCHARDS, THE:** Musical act (1910, 1914, 1920) Aka The Musical Blanchards.
- BLANFORD, ADA:** Soprano (1914)

- * **BLUETT, FRED:** Comic (1917) An ex-Allen Doone Co member, Bluett was a circuit star attraction while on contract with Clay's. He performed with son Gus during Clay's engagement. One popular sketch was "Training for a Boxing Match" with Gus and Mark Erickson, Sept 1917.
- * **BLUETT, GUS:** Comic/sketch artist (1917) Son of Fred Bluett.
- BOHAM, BOY:** (1919)
- BON BONS, THE (FOUR):** Juvenile female singer/dancers (1919) Students of Myrtle Nagel.
- BONETTA, VIOLET:** (1909)
- BONNAN, IVY:** (1916)
- BONNY AND FREEMAN:** Coloured patterologists/dance/terpsichorean artists (1919)
- BOOMERANG DUO, THE:** [Abrahams family] (1917) One of the first prize winners at the NBT Amateur Trial nights, 1917.
- BORNEO, "THE MONKEY MAN":** (1917)
- BOSTON, IVY:** (1920)
- BOSTON, NORMAN:** Actor (1915, 1918)
- BOUNCING BELMONTs, THE:** [Vic Dentine and Young Clemo] Trampoline act. (1916)
- BOUNCING BUSHES, THE:** (1914)
- BOURKE, KITTY:** (1915)
- BOVIS, BILLY:** Comic (1929) Engaged for Mo' Merrymakers Qld tour.
- * **BOVIS BROTHERS, THE:** [Charles and Will] Comedians (1910)
- * **BOWMAN, IVY:** [aka Ivy Cass/Dolly Cass] Patterologist/singer (1912-14, 1916-20, 1925-26) NSW/Qld tour: 1912-14.
Partnered husband Billy Cass. See also Cass and Cass.
- NB: Bowman is often written as Beaumont or spelt Bowmont in reviews.
- * **BOWMONT, BERTHA:** Juvenile dancer (1919-21)
- BOYCE, BILLY:** (1925)
- BOYLE, JAMES W:** Manager/advance rep (1901-10, 1912-1924) NSW/Qld tours: 1901-1909 (both 1909 vaudeville and Walter Bentley tours), 1912. Mngr. North Sydney Coliseum 1917-18; Eden Gardens, Manly 1918; NBT, 1923-24.
- BOYLE, LILY:** Dancer (1920) Known for toe-dance.
- * **BRACEY, WILL:** Singer/endman/dancer/comedian (1901, 1910) NSW/Qld tour: 1901 Appeared with the Caley/Morley Musical Comedy Co, ca.1917.
- BRADNAS, THE:** [Charles Bradna, plus male and female partners] novelty act (1915-16) Act included hat spinning and comic boomerang hats.
- BRAILLIE, JULIA:** Singer/pianist (1906) NSW/Qld tour: 1906.
- BREEVES, BERT:** (1914)
- BRENNAN, ROSIE:** Soprano (1917, 1920-21, 1927) Duets with Will Dyson, ca.1920.
- * **BREWER, MEL:** Baritone (1914)
- * **BRIGHTIE AND CARLYON:** (1928)
- BRIDGE THEATRE TRIO, THE:** [Harry Clay, Marshall Crosby, Maurice Chenoweth] (1918) Aka The Princess Theatre Trio.
- BRILLIANT, MAY:** (1916)
- BRITNELL, OLIVE:** (1910)
- BROADWAY AND ROY:** (1924)
- BROADWAYS, THE:** (1924)
- BROGAN BROTHERS, THE:** Dancers (1927) Exponents of the "Blackbottom" and "Charleston" dances.
- * **BROOKE, LALLA:** Quick change artist/impersonation (1918) NSW/Qld tour: Toured NZ in 1918 and USA between 1913-16; Working the Fullers' circuit 1917-18.
- * **BROOKS, PETER J:** Tenor (1914, 1916, 1920, 1927) NSW/Qld Tour: 1916.
- BRONSON, EUSTACE:** (1917)
- BRONSONS, THE:** Sketch artists (1917, 1922-23)
- BROUGHTONS, THE:** (1924)
- * **BROWN, BILLY:** (1918)
- BROWN, BOBBY:** (1920)
- BROWN, DOT:** (1918)
- BROWN, ELSIE:** Coon singer (1918-19)
- BROWN, FRED:** Juggler (1920)
- * **BROWN, LESTER:** American performer/revue writer and producer (1917) Engaged as producer for the revues at the NBT after coming off a Tivoli Contract. First production was *Mack's Troubles*. Took revues to Melbourne following his season at Clay's. Purchased 3 revues in USA for Harry Clay. Film publicist for Fox Films, ca.1926.
- BROWN, TOM:** (1927)
- BROWN, W.B:** Writer (1917) *Winning Tatt's* revue.
- BRUCE TRIO, THE:** (1917-18)
- * **BRULL AND HELMSLEY:** [Elsa Brull and Arthur Helmsley] English patter/impersonations (1924-25)
- BRYANT, JACK:** Ball-punching (1904) NSW/Qld tour: 1904.
- BUCHANAN, SID:** (1919)

- BUCKLEY:** Trapeze artist (1924)
- BUCKLEY, MAGGIE:** Singer (1918, 1922-23)
- BUDERICK, LEN:** Actor/conversationalist/circuit manager (1909, 1916-17, 1922) 1909 Walter Bentley Qld tour / Clay's circuit manager 1916 / Kate Howarde Co, ca.1917-20 (appeared in Howarde's *Possum Paddock*, ca.1919/20).
- BUDGEREE BILL:** Bush animal mimic (1921)
- BUNCH, THE:** (1922)
- BURGESS, HARRY:** (1916)
- BURNELLS, THE TWO:** (1918)
- BURNES, THELMA:** Juvenile singer (1918, 1920)
- BURNETTS, THE:** Male and female patter/singers/sketch artists (1918)
- * **BURT, LILIAS:** Singer/dancer/comedian (1923) First wife of Charlie Vaude. She died in 1931.
- BURTON, DICK:** (1922)
- BURTON, MARION:** Singer (1914)
- BUSH, EDDIE:** (1919)
- * **BUSHBY, ALFRED:** Negro comedian (1909, 1914)
- BUTLER, PEARL:** (1923)
- BUX, ALI (AND TROUPE):** Fire-eaters and Indian fakirs (1924)
- * **CALDWELL AND CRAWFORD:** [James Caldwell and Ernest Crawford] Duettists (1918)
- * **CALDWELL, JAMES:** Baritone/interlocutor/company manager (1916-22) NSW/Qld Tour, 1917. Aka the Domino King. Married to Bessie Phillips. See also Caldwell and Crawford. S Mngr at the Gaiety Theatre, 1920 / Clay's circuit company manager, 1920-21.
- * **CALEYS, THE:** [George Walker and Jessie Bunting] Scottish patter artists (1916-17) See the Caley/Morley Comedy Co (with Arthur Morley), ca.1917. Troupe included Will Bracey.
- CALLOWAY, TOD:** Comic/singer (1907) NSW/Qld tour: 1907.
- CALLOW, CHARLES "RED":** (1916-17)
- CAMERON, CELERE:** (1918)
- * **CAMERON, CLYDE:** Scotch tenor/song writer (1917-20) NSW/Qld tour: 1918.
- CAMERON, JEANIE:** (1922)
- CAMPBELL, COLIN:** (1916)
- CAMPBELL, JACK:** Advance rep (1908) Dramatic Company Qld tour: 1908.
- CAMPBELL, MAY:** Musical artiste (1913) NSW/Qld tour: 1913
- CAMPBELL AND BEAVER:** (1922)
- CAMPBELL AND MAYO:** (1920)
- * **CANE, FRANK:** Melbourne ventriloquist/shadowgraphist (1920) Aka Kavelio. Toured NSW with Copeland and Cole Vaudeville Co, 1924. Appeared on George Drew's Western Line circuit, 1925.
- CANNIS, LES:** Projectionist/Front of House manager/circuit manager (1910, 1912-1917) NSW/Qld tours: 1913, 1914.
- * **CAPEL, EILEEN:** Child mimic/singer/dancer/soubrette (1907, 1909-10) NSW/Qld tours: 1907, 1910.
- CAPTAIN McFARLANE'S DOG AND MONKEY CIRCUS:** (1927)
- CARDEN DUO, THE:** (1914)
- CARLINGFORDS, THE:** Singers/dancers/ acrobats (1920) Includes Mickey, of the Kewpie Kids, in the lead.
- CARLOSS AND GLYN:** (1915)
- CARLSON, FRED:** (1915)
- * **CARLSONS, THE MUSICAL:** [Frederick Carlson, wife and child, plus Cyril Blake and William Harris, ca.1929] English musical act (1915, 1925-26). Took their own touring company through Qld for Birch and Carroll during the mid-1920s. The troupe included Delroy and Delaney, the Two De Paines, and a chorus and ballet.
- CARLTON, JEAN:** (1920)
- CARLTON, HARRY:** (1917)
- * **CARLTON AND SUTTON:** Comedians/patterologists/dancers (1909-10, 1917)
- * **CARLTON DUO, THE:** (1922)
- * **CARLYON, WILL:** Light comedian (1917-19, 1921) Appeared with Dick Montague's Pierrots, 1919. See also the Gadabout B-boys.
- * **CARNEY, DENIS:** English comic (1906, 1910, 1914-16, 1919) Renowned for his routine "Send for a Pleeceman."
- CARRINGTON, ELLA:** Actress/manager (1914) See also Charles Taylor. Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, NBT, 1914; *Never Despair* and *Slaves of London* NBT, 1915. Ella Carrington's career goes back to at least the late 1870s. She toured her own theatrical company during the 1880s and with the Taylor-Carrington troupe during the 1890s and 1900s. Carrington was still performing as late as 1916, appearing in such productions as *Fact'ry 'And's* (Palace Theatre, Syd; Feb. 1916)

- CARROLL, BILLY:** Singer (1920) Billed as the "Singing Sundowner."
- CARROLL, CON:** Comic/dancer (1909, 1911) NSW/Qld tour: 1911.
- CARTNELL, STAN:** (1926)
- CASIER, GERMAINE:** (1928)
- CASH, CHARLES:** Tyrolian vocalist (1917)
- * **CASH, HARRY:** Comic/dancer/cornerman/revue company producer (1915-17, 1919, 1925-26, 1928) Referred to as "the black laugh." Also appeared with Harry Cash Revue Co.
 - * **CASS, BILLY "SKEETA":** Comedian/revue company producer and writer (1912-20, 1925-26, 1928) NSW/Qld tour: 1913. Billed as "three feet of comedy." Partnered wife Ivy Bowman (aka Ivy Cass/Dolly Cass). Also operated the Skeeta Cass Revue Co, ca.1926.
- CASS, DOLLY: [Aka Ivy Cass/Ivy Bowman]
- * **CASS, IVY:** [aka Dolly Cass] (1912-14, 1916-20, 1925-26, 1928) NSW/Qld tour: 1913.
- CASS AND BOWMAN:** [Billy Cass and Ivy Bowman] See Cass and Cass.
- NB: Bowman's name was spelt as Bowmont, and sometimes Beaumont.
- * **CASS AND CASS:** [Billy and Ivy/Dolly] Patterologists/singers/sketch artists (1912-14, 1916, 1918-20, 1925-26) NSW/Qld tour: 1913.
- CASSELLI SISTERS, THE:** Singers (1916) Aka The Casselli Girls.
- * **CELERE:** French-Italian musical comedian (1917) Aka Frederoni (and Gosward ?). Produced revues for Les James, ca.1918.
- CELINE:** (1920)
- CERBASIS, THE:** Harpsichordists (1918)
- * **CESARONI, LUCIEN:** Italian baritone/operatic singer (1917) Ex-Gonsalez Opera Co.
- CESTRIA:** Acrobatic juggling waiter (1920)
- CESTRIAS, THE:** Acrobats/jugglers (1918)
- CHADWICK, HENRY:** NSW country circuit manager (ca.1917) Replaced Wally Edwards when he was away on Qld tour duties.
- CHAL, CHAP, LIN TRIO:** (1916)
- CHAMPION, FRED:** (1914)
- CHAMPNEY, WALTER:** Comic (1918)
- CHANDON, FAYE:** Singer/pianist (1920)
- * **CHARLBERT BROTHERS, THE:** [Charles Olsen and Bert Lindsay] Acrobatics/strength act (1916, 1919) Aka the Charlbert Brothers and Essie (Essie Davis, aged 14 in 1916) / the Charlbert Brothers and Harry (Harry Davis, Essie's younger brother – ca.1919). Originally from Port Augusta, South Aust. Worked both the Tivoli and Fullers circuits. One of the brothers married to La Belle Marie Sole of Sole Brothers Circus family.
 - * **CHARLES, JOE:** Comedian (1914, 1916-18, 1920-21) Partnered Emile Dani ("The Glory Girl") for many years.
 - * **CHASE, CARLTON:** American singer/revue and burlesque lead (1924) Arrived in Australia with the Grafters troupe (with Paul Stanhope, Harry Ross, and Leonard Nelson). Later with American Musical Burlesque Co (under direction of William Anderson) / Fullers 1914 / Paul Stanhope Burlesque Co, 1915 / Bert La Blanc Revue Co. Previously toured South Africa, and USA with Ziegfield Follies.
- CHE LEE CHE LOON TRIO, THE:** (1920)
- CHENOWETH AND DAVIDSON:** [Maurice Chenoweth and Alec Davidson] (1918)
- CHENOWETH AND TUTTY:** [Maurice Chenoweth and Ted Tutty] (1918)
- * **CHENOWETH, MAURICE:** Singer/straight-man/theatre and company manager/producer (1914, 1916-28) Clay's manager ca.1920-25. General manager of Bridge Theatre Co 1925-1928. See also The Bridge Theatre Trio / Chenoweth and Tutty / Chenoweth and Davidson.
- CHESNEY, MARY:** Clay's M Dir./pianist (1918, 1920-ca.1925) NSW/Qld tour: 1918.
- CHESTER:** Animal act (1917) Billed as the horse with the human brain.
- CHIVELLI:** Man and dog act (1917) [dog called "Spot"]
- CHRISSIES, THE:** (1915)
- CHUNG DOO DUO, THE:** Chinese juvenile vocalists (1927)
- CLARE, DELMA:** (1919) Appeared with Dick Montague's Pierrots, 1919.
- CLARE, MARIE:** (1920)
- CLARINOS, THE:** [Colin Clarino and ?] Musical act (1915-16) Billed as 'the concertina kings.'
- * **CLARKE, SYDNEY:** Dancing violinist (1920, 1926-27) NSW/Qld tour: 1927. Leader of the Royal Five Combination, ca.1924. Tivoli circuit 1925.
- CLAY, CATHERINE:** [Mrs Harry Clay] See Kate Henry.
- * **CLAY, ESSIE:** Contralto/juvenile performer/actress (1901-1914) Daughter of Harry Clay.
 - * **CLAY, HARRY:** Tenor/interlocutor/proprietor/theatrical agent/revue actor (1901-1925) NSW/Qld tours: 1901-1905, 1908, 1910-12. Known to have partnered (on occasion) Ted Tutty, Ted Stanley, Maurice Chenoweth, Wally Edwards, and Arthur Morley. See also Erickson and Clay/ The Harmonious Three / The Bridge Theatre Trio.
- CLAY'S BURLESQUERS:** (1922)
- CLAY'S CABARET JAZZERS:** (1922)

- CLAY'S CHAMPION KEWPIE KIDS:** (1918) Aka Clay's Six Kewpie Kids, with Will Gilbert, George Pagden, Ted Tutty, Max Martin, George Livingstone and Maurice Chenoweth.
- CLAY'S COSTUME COMEDY AND SPECIALTY COMPANY:** (1917)
With Emily Dani, Ruby Drury, Daisy Silvester, Ward Lear, Joe Charles, Maurice Chenoweth, Kingsley and Graham, and Arthur Elliott (directed by Joe Charles).
- CLAY'S JAZZ BAND:** (1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1927. Billed as "Clay's Jazzy Jazz Band."
- CLAY'S LAWN JAZZERS:** (1922)
- CLAY'S NEW MUSICAL COMEDY COMPANY:** (1916)
- CLAY'S PIERROT COMPANY:** (1916)
- CLAY'S QUARTETTE:** (1917, 1923) Incl. Harry Clay, Maurice Chenoweth, Jack McGowan and Arthur Morley.
- CLAY'S VOCAL GROUP:** (1926) Aka Clay's Vocal Quintette.
- CLAY'S NIGGER MINSTREL COMPANY:** (1926)
- CLAYTON AND CROME:** Female dancers (1915, 1919) One partner was a male impersonator.
- CLEMO AND BRADY:** (1923)
- CLEMO:** Musical act/xylophone (1916)
- CLIFFE BOYS, THE:** Patterologists (1918)
- CLIFFORD, VIOLET:** (1914)
- CLIFF SISTERS, THE:** Singers/acrobatic dancers (1915, 1917-18, 1921-22) Aka The Cliff Girls/The Two Cliffs.
- CLIFTON, LYLA:** (1917) One of the first prize winners at the NBT Amateur Trial nights, 1917.
- CLINTON AND McNAMARA:** Patter/singers/jazz dances (1921)
- CLINTON, KITTY:** (1918)
- * **CLIVALLI'S MINIATURE CIRCUS:** [Clive Clivelli] Animal act (1924) Animals incl. dogs and pigeons.
- CLOTHILDA AND CO:** (1917)
- CLYDE AND YVETTE:** Novelty dancers (1927, 1929) Appeared on Mo's Merrymakers Qld tour.
- COBURN, LILY:** Soubrette (1922, 1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1927.
- COCO AND CHICO:** Chimpanzees (1916)
- COCO AND EVANS:** Hand balancing (1920)
- * **COLE, LES:** [see Levante]
- COLEMAN, MRS JOHN:** Serio and scarecrow dancer (1904) NSW/Qld tour: 1904.
- * **COLEMAN, RUBY:** (1921)
 - * **COLEMAN, ROSIE:** Acrobatic serio (1911-12, 1919-20) See also Coleman Sisters.
 - * **COLEMAN SISTERS, THE:** [Rosie and Carmen] Acrobats/duettists/dancers (1910-11, 1916, 1919) NSW/Qld tour: 1911.
Toured the USA, 1920.
- COLINO:** Juggler (1920)
- COLLESON, ALLEN:** Singer (1926) Billed as "the boy baritone with a phenomenal voice."
- COLLIER, STELLA:** Soprano (1928, 1929) Appeared on Mo's Merrymakers Qld tour.
- COLLIER SISTERS, THE:** (1916-17) Toured South Africa, 1916.
- COLLIVER, ALICE:** (1917)
- COLLINS, LUCY:** (1918)
- COMPTON, KATHLEEN:** (1918)
- CONNIE AND OLIVE:** (1917)
- CONNOLLY, KEITH:** Comic/leg-work/singer/patter (1919-20)
- CONTORTIONIST ALMA:** Contortionist (1923)
- CONWAY AND BEECHAM:** (1922)
- COOCH, MR:** (1917) One of the first winners at the NBT Amateur Trial nights, 1917.
- COOGEE BUNYIPS, THE FIVE:** (1920)
- COOK AND HANDMAN:** (1917)
- COOMBER, HAZEL:** Multi-instrumentalist (1926-27)
- COOPER, HAL:** (1928)
- CONEY, LES:** (1918)
- CORNWELL, DONALD:** Recitals to moving pictures (1916)
- * **CORONA:** Cornetist (1917-18) Billed as the 'Wandering Musician. Appeared with George Pagden's Co, ca.1917.
- CORRELLI, BLANCHE:** Singer. (1915)
- CORRELLI, GEORGE:** (1925)
- * **CORRIE, BERT:** Comedian/tenor/patriotic songs (1910, 1914-17, 1919, 1922) NSW/Qld Tours: 1915, 1916. Born James H. Corrigan. Partnered Doris Baker as Corrie and Baker / Joe Verne as Corrie and Verne / Katie Gourlay (Heather Belle), ca.1925. See also The Austral Trio (with Doris Baker and Joe Verne). Appeared with the Sunshine Co (with Verne and Baker), ca.1920.
 - * **CORRIE AND BAKER:** [Bert Corrie and Doris Baker] (1917, 1919) See also Austral Trio.
 - * **COSGROVE, JOHN:** Actor/monologues/circuit manager (1908, 1915, 1917) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908. Clay's NSW country circuit manager, 1917.

- COSTELLO, AMY:** (1918) See also Costello and Cox.
- * **COSTELLO AND COX:** [Amy Costello and Jack Cox] Musical comedy sketch artists (1918)
 - COSTELLO, JOE:** (1925)
 - COSTELLO, ROSIE:** Singer/dancer (1921)
1890s with his family. Husband of Amy Blackie; father-in-law of Victor Prince.
 - COURT, HARTLEY:** (1923, 1926-27)
 - * **COURTNEY, EVA:** (1916, 1926) See also The Courtneys / Vince Courtney.
 - COURTNEY, LOU:** Advance rep/moving picture and limelight operator/plate spinning/equilibrist. (1904 -10) NSW/Qld tours: 1904-05 (advance rep), 1908, 1910 (operator). Often described as "the renowned electrician" he operated film projectors and limelight machines, in addition to his vaudeville act. Spruiker for the Gaiety Theatre, ca.1920.
 - * **COURTNEY, VINCE:** Singer/songwriter (1915-16, 1922) See also Courtney and Shaw, ca.1915. Australian song writer, specialising in patriotic songs. Worked solo and in partnership with wife Eva.
 - * **COURTNEY (MAUDE) AND MR C:** (1923)
 - * **COURTNEY AND SHAW:** [Harry Shaw and Vince Courtney] Musical act/singers (1915)
 - * **COURTNEYS, THE:** [Vince and Eva Courtney] (1916) Aka The Two Courtney's.
 - COUSINS, ETHEL:** (1923)
 - COVENY, DICK:** (1918)
 - * **COWAN, JOE:** Comic/singer/endman/tour manager (1907-08) NSW/Qld tours: 1907, 1908. With Little Roy, 1907.
 - COWRIE, JESSIE:** (1919) Appeared with Dick Montague's Pierrots, 1919.
 - COWLEY, EDITH:** Contralto (1917)
 - COX, EILEEN:** Singer (1921) See also Freddy Hayes and Eileen Cox.
 - * **COX, JACK:** (1918) See also Costello and Cox.
 - * **COYLE, HARRY:** Comic/endman (1920-22) Originally from Melbourne.
 - * **CRACKNELLS, THE:** Whipwork/sharpshooters/larriet spinners/greyhound jumping (1919, 1921) Dogs performed high jumps. One dog held the (then) record of 13' 9" (1919).
 - CRAIGS, THE:** (1914)
 - * **CRAWFORD, ERNEST:** Singer (1917-19) See also Caldwell and Crawford. On Fullers' circuit in 1919.
 - CRAWFORD, HERBERT:** (1917)
 - CRAYDON AND MACK:** Dancers (1921) Known for their interpretation of the "buck dance."
 - CRAYDON GIRLS, THE:** Dancers/singers [2]. (1914, 1917)
 - * **CRAYDON, JAMES "JIMMY":** Singer/company manager (1917-19) Employed by Clay's as both performer and manager (Gaiety) / booking agent for the Melrose Theatre (Perth). Father of Letty Craydon. Partnered Ted Holland and Tom Delohery between 1883 and ca. 1904.
 - * **CRAYDON, LETTY:** Singer/comic/foot-tossing/dance school proprietor (1916-17, 1920-21, 1926) Ex-Tom Haverly's Revue Co. Appeared with Jim Gerald Co, ca.1923, 1928 / Fullers, 1929. Was once described by TT as "a plump, pink legged baby [who] takes the eye." Dance school operator with Addie Bartou 1924 - ?. The Five Craydons (students) toured suburban picture theatres (1924). Troupe was Emma Trick, Roma Murphy, Doreen Smith, Mona Macquarie and Doris Findon. Original cast member of *The Sentimental Bloke*, 1961. Married to Ron Shand, daughter of James Craydon.
 - CREBER, MURIEL:** Singer/dancer (1920-21) Known for a doll dance. Ex-William Anderson pantomime actress.
 - CREIGHTONS, THE:** (1914)
 - CREEL, FRED: [see Fritz Holland]
 - CRONINS, THE:** Singers. (1914)
 - * **CROSBY, MARSHALL:** Baritone/stage manager/company manager (1914-15, 1918-22) Described by Harry Clay as "a declamatory baritone." Long association with George Wallace. S Mngr. for Clays c.1918 / in charge of a Clay's company ca. Nov. 1918. See also The Bridge Theatre Trio. Original cast member of *Collits' Inn*, 1932.
 - CROSS, QUEENIE:** Actress (1914-15) Engaged for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, NBT, 1914 and *Never Despair*, NBT 1915.
 - * **CROTTY, GEORGE:** American black-face comic/dancer (1917-19) NSW/Qld tour, 1918. See also Gadabout B-hoys.
 - CROYDONS, THE FOUR:** Singers/dancers (1920-21) Aka "The Kelly Gang."
 - CS', THE TWO:** (1915, 1928) Aka The Three Cs.
 - CURLWAA TRIO, THE:** (1920)
 - CUTHBERT, JACK:** (1916)

 - DAINTY YVETTE:** Contortionist (1924)
 - D'ALBOS, THE:** (1917)
 - DALE, DAISY:** (1918, 1922)
 - * **DALE, MURIEL:** Singer/dancer/patter artist (1915, 1917) Fullers Dramatic Co actress early 1920s. Returned to vaudeville ca.1924.

- * **DALE AND BARLING:** [Maurice Barling and Tom Dale] English patterologists (1924-26) Tom Dale appeared with Jim Gerald Revue Co ca. 1928-34.
- DALMENY, VIOLET:** (1914)
- DALTON, MINNIE:** (1921)
- DALTON, VIMY:** (1922)
- DALY, GUS:** (1915)
- DALY, MAY:** (1916)
- DAME, THE:** (1918) "Late of J.C. Williamson's pantomime."
- DANCING KEYS:** (1924)
- DANDY DUO, THE:** (1921)
- DANELIS, THE:** (1922)
- * **DANI, EMILE:** Singer (1914, 1916-17, 1921) Often referred to as the "Glory Girl," she partnered Joe Charles for many years (they were not husband and wife).
- DAPHNE:** (1919)
- D'ARCY, VIOLET:** Actress (1914-15) Engaged for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, NBT, 1914; *Never Despair* and *Slaves of London* NBT, 1915.
- DARE, MARIE:** (1918-19)
- DAREDEVIL BAITO:** (1920)
- DAREDEVIL SKATERS:** (1928)
- * **DARRAGH, MARGARET:** Singer (1919) Partnered Victor Paulastro, 1919.
- * **DARRAGH AND PAULESTO:** [Margaret Darragh and Victor Paulastro] Duettists (1919)
- DARRAGHS, THE:** (1922)
- DARRAINE AND LE ROY:** French comiques (1924)
- * **DARRELL, IVY:** Melbourne born instrumentalist/musical act (1917) NSW/Qld tour: 1917. Played banjo and improvised instruments such as saucers, etc.
- DARTNELL, MAY:** (1918)
- * **DARWINIANS, THE:** Male and female acrobats (1920-21) Man in ape costume, woman in ballet costume, perform tricks on a ladder which turns somersaults of its own.
- DAVIDSON, ALEC:** Baritone/straightman (1918)
- DAVIDSON, GEORGE:** (1916)
- DAVIDSON, IVY:** (1923)
- DAVIS AND LEE:** (1920, 1922)
- DAVIS, EDNA:** (1917)
- * **DAVIS, IVY:** (1916-19) Partnered Courtney Ford as Ford and Davis. Sister of Dorothy Davis (Fullers pantomime actress/singer).
- DAVIS, PERCY:** Musical conductor/pianist (1910, 1913-1918) NSW/Qld tour: 1910. Conducted a five piece orchestra the NBT. TT: once noted: "Percy Davis's orchestra leaves far behind many of the orchestras to be heard in the cities, particularly in the picture houses."
- DAVIS, RICHARD A. 'DICK':** Irish comic (1902) NSW/Qld tour: 1902.
- DAVIS, ROSE:** (1916)
- DAWSON AND DALGLEISH:** Dancing specialties (1925)
- DAY, RUBY:** Singer. (1919)
- D'BAKERS:** Belgian posers (1916, 1920)
- DEAL, FRED:** (1920, 1926-27)
- DEAL AND MAYNARD:** [Fred Deal and Jean Maynard] Comics/singers (1920-21, 1923)
- DEAN, FLORRIE:** (1918) See also McCabe and Dean.
- DEAN, GEORGE:** Descriptive vocalist (1917)
- DEARIN, MABEL:** (1917)
- DE AUDBREYS, THE:** Comic act with dog (1915) Comprised a woman, a man and a dog.
- DEAVE'S MANIKINS:** (1915)
- DE BAKERS, THE:** Artistic posing (1918)
- DE BOUVIA GIRLS, THE:** Statue posing (1917)
- DE BURS, THE:** (1927) Act described as "poperology."
- * **DE CAR, CLAUDE:** Comic/juggler/acrobat/tumbler (1917, 1920) Toured USA 1924-25. Began working a double act with his wife as the De Cars in 1924.
- DEERING, MABS:** (1917)
- DE FORREST AND KEYS:** Card tricksters (1917)
- DELANDERS, ELSIE:** (1917)
- DELANEY, JAMES:** (1915)
- * **DELAVALLE AND GILBERT:** [Ern Delavale and Will Gilbert] Comic team/eccentric dancers (1909, 1912, 1915-16) NSW/Qld tours: 1909, 1912, 1916.

- * **DELAVALLE AND STAGPOOLE:** [Charles Delavale and Elvie Stagpoole] Comics/patter/sketches (1921-27)
- * **DELAVALLE AND TAUCHERT:** [Ern Delavale and Arthur Tauchert] Comic team ca.1914
- * **DELAVALLE AND VOCKLER:** [Ern Delavale and Lily Vockler] Comics/patter (1923-1926)
- * **DELAVALLE BROTHERS, THE:** [Ern Delavale and Ern Vockler] Comics/patter (1920, 1925) Three years with Fullers prior to reappearance on Clay's circuit in 1920. Ern Vockler performed Charlie Chaplin impersonations. Toured India, South Africa, UK, NZ.
- * **DELAVALLE, CHARLES "IKE":** Comic/company manager (1920-28) See also Delavale and Stagpoole. NB: Not related to Ern Delavale.
- * **DELAVALLE, ERN M:** Comic/singer (1909, 1912, 1915-16, 1919-20, 1923-26) NSW/Qld tours: 1909, 1912, 1916. Toured India, South Africa, UK, NZ. See also Delavale and Vockler / Delavale and Gilbert / Delavale Brothers / Pagden and Delavale / Delavale and Tauchert. Husband of Lily Vockler, brother-in-law of Ern Vockler. Australian Variety Artists Federation Vice President ca.1913/14. Resigned in 1914 to start his own organisation, the Refined Vaudeville Entertainers. NB: Not related to Charles Delavale.
- DELMONT TRIO, THE:** (1922)
- DELROY AND DELANEY:** English comedy couple (1924)
- DELSOS, THE:** Aerial artists (1915-16)
- DE LUCA BOYS, THE:** (1922)
- * **DELWYNE, CEL:** (1922-23) [see also Stewart and Delwyne]
- DELWYNNE, MISS:** Serio (1920)
- DELWYNE AND TYE:** [Annie Tye and Cel Delwyne] (1915, 1917, 1920)
- DEMPSEY, DAN:** (1916)
- * **DENTINES, THE AERIAL:** Acrobatics/strength (1915-17) Aka The Dentines/Death Defying Dentines. Billed as "iron-jawed marvels in their slide for life"
- DENTON, GEORGE:** (1921)
- DENTON, MARJORIE:** (1916)
- DE ROEBUCK, HARRY:** (1919) Appeared with Dick Montague's Pierrots, 1919.
- * **DESBORO, KATHLEEN:** Singer (1917-22, 1924) Billed as "the shimmie girl."
- * **DESBORO AND MACK:** (1922, 1924) See also Kathleen Desboro.
- DE SILVA:** Acrobat/skater (1920-21) Billed as "the drunk on the wire." Act included standing on his head on a slack wire.
- * **DESMOND, BERT "MUGSY":** Comic/singer/dancer/writer/revue producer (1914-17, 1925-27) NSW/Qld tour: 1917. See also Desmond and Jansen. Led Bert Desmond Revue Co in 1926 / also known as Mugsy Desmond Troupe, ca. 1926. Married to Mattie Jansen.
- DESMOND AND DALTON:** (1915)
- * **DESMOND AND JANSEN:** [Bert Desmond and Mattie Jansen] Patter artists (1914-17, 1925-27) NSW/Qld tour: 1917. Husband and wife act.
- DETTMANN, ALBERT:** Theatregraph/limelight operator (1909) NSW/Qld tours: 1909
- DEVERAUX, WILL:** Comic/singer (1915) Renown for his laughing and whistling songs.
- DE VERE, LEONORA:** Artistic posing (1918) Posed to slides.
- DE VERE, NANCY:** (1920)
- DE VINE, DOT:** (1916-17) See also the Gadabout Girls.
- D'GASTON:** (1916)
- DIAMOND, LAURA:** Singer/mandolin/banjo/dancer (1907) NSW/Qld tour: 1907.
- * **DINKS AND COMPANY:** [See Dinks Patterson]
- DINKS AND JIMMIE:** Comedy duo (1922, 1923) See also Dinks Patterson
- DINKS AND ONCUS:** Comedy duo (1919-1924) See also George Wallace / Dinks Patterson.
- DIVER, MRS HARRY:** Actor. (1914)
- DIX DOROTHY TRIO, THE:** [Dorothy White and ?] Dancers (1917)
- DIXON, GEORGE:** (1922)
- * **DIXON, RENE:** Dancer/soubrette (1919-21) Appeared with Fullers Novelettes Revue Co, 1929. Troupe included Amy Rochelle, Verna Bain and Lulla Fanning.
- DOLEND, MADEMOISELLE:** (1922)
- DOMINO KING, THE:** Singer (1921)
- DONNELLY, TOM:** Dancer (1918)
- DOPEY:** (1922)
- DO-RE-MI:** (1915)
- DORMER, DOLLY:** (1917)
- DORMER, VIOLET:** Soubrette (1916)
- DORMER AND LLOYD:** (1915)
- DORSETTS, THE:** Dancers. (1926) Aka "The Six Dancing Dorsetts."
- DOWLING, JIM:** (1920)
- DOWNES, MAY:** Singer/dancer (1917)

- DOWNEY, ROSIE:** (1922)
- DOYES SISTERS, THE:** (1921)
- DOZEY AND DOURA:** (1918)
- DREW, DOROTHY:** (1917)
- * **DREW, GEORGE:** Melbourne comic/leg-work/ventriloquist/baton spinning/revue writer (1920-1924) See also Drew and Harris.
Worked with Jim Romaine in Drew-Romaine Trio, 1920. Operated a NSW Western Line circuit, ca. 1925.
 - DREW AND HARRIS:** [George Drew and Jim Harris] Billed as two boys and a piano (1917-18)
 - * **DREW AND ROMAINE:** (1920-21) See also George Drew/Jim Romaine.
 - * **DRISCOLL, ALF:** Comic (1909, 1916, 1925, 1927) Partnership with brother Bob, "The Driscoll Brothers." Solo act with Clay's in 1927 / partnered Clara Keating briefly in 1927.
 - DRISCOLL, BILLY:** Circuit/company manager (1920)
 - * **DRISCOLL BROTHERS, THE:** [Alf and Bob] (1909, 1916, 1925) Began their careers in Melbourne with their father in juvenile minstrel shows (ca.1905). Toured NZ several times, and worked for Fullers for many years.
 - DRISCOLL TRIO:** (1915)
 - DRUMMOND AND ROCHFORD:** (1926)
 - DRUMS, THE:** (1920)
 - DRURY, RUBY:** (1916-17)
 - * **DRYSDALE, BRUCE:** Comic singer/the quaint comedian (1909-11, 1915-16) NSW/Qld Tours: 1910, 1911 (*Bo-Peep* tour).
With Stanley MacKay pantomime company ca.1914-16. Toured UK ca.1920-21. Married to Phyllis Faye.
 - DRYSDALE AND FAYE:** [Bruce Drysdale and Phyllis Faye] Comics/patter/songs (1915-16) Husband and wife team.
 - * **DUCKWORTHS, THE:** [Billy Duckworth and ?] Comic acrobats (1915) With Fullers 1915.
 - * **DUDLEY, BERT:** (1917, 1923, 1925-27) See also The Dudleys.
 - * **DUDLEY, EVELYN:** (1923, 1925-26) See also The Dudleys.
 - DUDLEY, FLO:** (1917)
 - * **DUDLEYS, THE:** [Bert and Evelyn] (1916-17, 1923, 1925-26) Aka The Two Dudleys. Bert often played the drunk husband.
 - * **DUGGAN, LOUIE:** Soprano (1914, 1916-19, 1921) NSW/Qld tour: 1916. Referred to as the "Devonshire Nightingale." Sister to actress Eugenie Duggan.
 - DUNOON, VIOLET:** (1916)
 - DUTTON, DAISY:** (1916)
 - DUTTON, MAY:** (1916)
 - DUVAL, AMY:** (1917)
 - DWYER, JACK:** (1921)
 - * **DYSON, WILL:** American comic/leg eccentricities (1910, 1918-20) Aka Long Bill Dyson. Billed as "two-storied comedian."
Makeup, consisted of small patches of white within his blackened face, created a "Mephistophelian appearance." Performed duets with Rosie Brennan, ca.1920.
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- * **EADE AND NORMAN:** Sketch artists [Ernest Eade and Charles Norman] (1923)
 - * **ECLAIR BROTHERS, THE:** [Twins Billy and ?] Specialty artists/equilibrist/acrobatics/strength act (1914-16, 1922, 1929)
NSW/Qld tour: 1915.
 - EDDIE AND EDNA:** (1925)
 - * **EDGERTON, WINNIE:** Soprano (1920-22) Billed as "the blue mountain nightingale."
 - * **EDENBURY, CHARLES:** American equilibrist/hand balancer (1917) With Fullers 1916.
 - * **EDWARDS, ALF:** Coon impersonator (1914, 1918-22)
 - * **EDWARDS, GEORGE:** Patter/comic/revue writer-producer (1918-19) Writer of *Nosey Parker Nose* 1918 and *Toyland* 1919.
Husband of Rosie Parks. Born St Peters (Adelaide). J.C. Williamson actor. With Fullers 1915.
 - EDWARDS, MAY:** (1915, 1918)
 - * **EDWARDS, TOM:** Comedian and acrobat (1904) NSW/Qld tour: 1904. Father of Mrs General Mite (married to General Tom Thumb). Died July 1918, a derelict.
 - EDWARDS, THE TWO:** (1918)
 - EDWARDS, WALTER "WALLY":** Bass baritone/Qld tour manager/interlocutor (1902-ca.1927)
 - EDWARDS AND DANTON:** (1918)
 - EDYTHE, COWLEY:** (1926)
 - EGAN, ARTHUR:** Actor (1909) Engaged for Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909.
 - EILEEN AND MARJORIE:** Tumblers (1925)
 - ELECTRINES, THE:** (1919)
 - ELEJEAN:** Contortionist (1926)
 - EL FREDIA:** Contortionist (1923)

- * **ELLIOTT, ARTHUR:** [Arthur Hargrave] Acrobatic comedian/cornerman/singer/dancer (1909-10, 1912, 1915-17, 1919-22) NSW/Qld tour: 1912. Specialties included Scottish songs / partnered Nat Hanley, 1922. Married to Maud Fanning, father of Violet, Huia, Lulla, Arthur and Mercia.
- ELLIOTT, ENID:** (1922)
- * **ELLIOTT, HARRY:** Irish comedian/singer/dancer (1903, 1905, 1910) NSW/Qld tours: 1903, 1905, 1910. Died approx Jan/Feb 1915, destitute (aged about 40 years).
- * **ELLIOTT, MERCIA:** Singer/dancer (1909, 1912, 1920, 1922) Daughter of Arthur Elliott and Maude Fanning. Performed as a child with sister Lulla as the Elliott Sisters. Toured England with family ca.1907.
- * **ELLIOTT, LITTLE ARTHUR:** Juvenile acrobat/singer (1912) NSW/Qld tour: 1912. Son of Arthur Elliott and Maude Fanning. Performed as an assistant to his father during his childhood.
- * **ELLIOTT SISTERS, THE:** [Lulla and Mercia] Singers/dancers (1909, 1912) NSW/Qld tour: 1912.
- * **ELLIOTT, LULLA:** [see Lulla Fanning - Elliott Sisters]
- * **ELLIOTT, VIOLET:** Serio/comic/contralto (1907, 1909, 1912, 1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1912.
Daughter of Arthur Elliott and Maude Fanning. Toured England with family ca.1907. Billed as "the funny fat girl." Described as an eccentric comic with "a junoesque figure," 1927. Was married to comedian Harry Shine.
- ELMAS, THE:** Equilibrists/balancing act (1914, 1919) Aka The Elma Trio.
- ELTON, MAUDE:** (1917)
- EMMS AND BENT:** Sketch artists (1920)
- * **ERICKSON, MARK:** Descriptive vocalist/character actor (1914-17, 1920-24, 1926-27)
- * **ERICKSEN (MARK) & BONNIE:** [husband and wife team] (1914, 1923-24, 1926)
- ERICKSON AND CLAY:** [Mark Erickson and ? Clay] Duet act (1915) NB: not Harry Clay.
- * **ERMAKOV, ZAKAREE:** Russian Cossack Master of Arms/Russian Secret Service Agent/escaped prisoner from Germany (1918). Act included weapons exhibition and drills, war stories and lectures on his experiences while in the Russian Secret Service.
- ERN, ERN AND RULE:** Ventriloquist act (1915)
- ERNESTOS, THE:** (1916)
- ERNIE THE BOY WONDER:** (1922)
- * **ESDALE, RUBY:** Soubrette (1917, 1919)
- * **ESKBANK, MURIEL:** [aka Kate Tutty] Contralto (1913-1915) NSW/Qld tours: 1913, 1914. Born Kate Cahill.
- ESS AND ESS:** (1921)
- ESTELLES, THE:** Female dancers/singers/acrobats (1918-20) Aka The Two Estelles. Specialties included Scottish dances in Highland garb/poses and boy-girl numbers.
- * **EUGENE, LULU:** Comedian/dancer/singer (1909-11, 1914-19, 1922)
- * **EURASIAN:** Magician/specialty artist (1917, 1920) Billed as "continental wonder worker."
- EVERETT, GEORGE:** Actor (1914) Cast in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, NBT, 1914
- EVERETT, SYDNEY:** Actor (1908, 1915-16) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908. Cast in *Slaves of London*, NBT, 1915.
- EVERARD, WILLIAM:** Tenor (1916) See also the Revellers.

- FAGEN, CHARLIE:** Singer/comic (1917) 6 years old (ca.1917). The fourth winner of the NBT Amateur Trials, performing "Mr Booze"
- FAIRBANKS, WILL:** (1917) Ex-member of Mrs Archie Newbury's Musical Comedy Co, 1917.
- * **FANNING, LULLA:** Singer/actor/dancer (1910, 1912, 1924) NSW/Qld tour: 1912 (as one of the Elliott Sisters).
Appeared with George Wallace Revue Company ca.1925-26. Fullers Novelettes Revue Co, 1929 (troupe included Amy Rochelle, Verna Bain and Rene Dixon). Original cast member of *The Sentimental Bloke*, 1961.
- * **FANNING, MAUD:** Coon impersonator/singer (1907, 1909-10, 1912, 1915, 1919) NSW/Qld tour: 1912. Often billed as Maud Fanning and Family, working with children: Violet, Lulla, Mercia and Arthur (Elliott). Regularly billed as "Australia's premier Coon Singer." NB: Fanning's name (as with her brother Charles and daughter Lulla) was often spelt Faning.
- FARRELL, ARTHUR:** Dancer/comic/corner-man (1914-15) NSW/Qld tour: 1915. Also worked with Verroll / noted for his 'one-legged dance.'
- FARRELL, EDNA:** (1917)
- FARRELL, W. G:** [William] Pianist/conductor (1906-08) NSW/Qld tours: 1906, 1908.
- FARRELL AND VERREL:** [George Farrell, one legged dancer] (1917)
- * **FARROWS, THE:** English entertainers [Harry and Louie] (1917)
- FAUST, A.G:** (1914)
- * **FAYE, PHYLLIS:** Serio/soubrette/dancer/contortionist (1907, 1909-10, 1915-18) NSW/Qld tour: 1910. Married to Bruce Drysdale. Engaged by Stanley McKay's pantomime company for several years, including *Bo-Peep* ca.1915-16. Phyllis Faye and the Six Baby Dolls (c.1918) / Involved the infamous libel suit against Harry Sadler in 1918. Toured to Manilla (with Lily Alroy) 1919.

- FEILDING AND BRUCE:** Patterologists (1918)
- * **FELIX, PROFESSOR:** Animal act 'Five Little Wonders' (1919) Aka Felix's Monkeys. Act included two trick dogs and three acrobatic monkeys, one dressed ala Charlie Chaplin.
- FERNANDO:** (1915)
- * **FITZGERALD, S. A.:** Actor (1909) Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909. Father of Jim Gerald (comic, pantomime actor, revue producer) and Lancelot Vane (actor).
- FIVE BUSKERS, THE:** (1921)
- FIVE FUNNY Q'S, THE:** Comics (1921) Also billed "The Five Fussy Quaint Q's," 1921.
- * **FLEURY, EILEEN:** Juvenile soubrette/impersonations (1914, 1916-17)
- FLOOD, ROSIE:** Dancer/singer (1920)
- FLORENCE, MAUD:** Soubrette (1912) NSW/Qld tour: 1912.
- FLORRETTE, SISTERS:** Musical artists (1916)
- FLORRIE AND JOYCE:** Acrobatic dancers/singers (1927)
- FLUFFY:** (1917)
- FOLLIES, THE DANCING:** (1918)
- FOO, CHUN LIN:** Chinese Magician/escapologist(1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1927.
- FONTENOYS, THE:** (1916) Aka The Two Fontenoy's. Appeared with Stanley McKay's Pantomime Co, 1916.
- FORD, ANNIE:** (1915)
- * **FORD, COURTNEY:** Singer/producer (1916-19, 1926) Partnered wife, Ivy Davis in sketches.
- FORD, FREDDIE:** (1917, 1920, 1928)
- FORD, UNA:** (1919-20)
- * **FORD AND ALDOUS:** Singers/dancers/patter (1919-20)
 - * **FORD AND DAVIS:** [Courtney Ford and Ivy Davis] Musical comedy artists. (1915-16, 1918-19, 1926)
- FORD AND NELSON:** (1920)
- FORSYTHS, THE:** (1919)
- FOSTER, DORIS:** (1922)
- FOSTER, ROBERT:** (1915)
- * **FOUR BABY DOLLS, THE:** [incl Phyllis Faye and Olive Ruddle] Originally performed under Harry Sadler's direction. See also Phyllis Faye.
- FOX, FRED:** (1918)
- FRANCIS AND VOLTA:** Roman rings and strength (1921)
- FRANCIS, LES:** (1927) Referred to as "of golf ball fame."
- FRANCO:** Eccentric hobo (1921)
- FRANCO MIDGETS, THE:** (1914)
- * **FRANK AND ALICE:** (1920) [Frank Uren and Alice Johnston] Husband and wife act. See also Frank, Lank & Alice.
 - * **FRANK, LANK AND ALICE:** Jugglers/comedians (1916) Frank Uren, Alice Johnston and W. Thompson (Lank). Appeared in the *Bunyip* pantomime, Melb 1917.
- FRANKLIN, RUBY:** Serio/dancer (1907) NSW/Qld tour: 1907. Performed both solo turns and in sketches with Will Harley.
- FRANKLINS, THE:** (1915)
- FRANKS AND GALE:** (1927)
- FRANKS AND GREY:** [Gus Franks and Annie Grey] Comics (1914)
- FRASER, BOB:** (1904) NSW/Qld tour: 1904.
- FRASER, MEG:** (1918)
- FRAWLEY, VIOLET:** (1909)
- FRED AND EILEEN:** Singers and dancers (1921)
- FREDERICKS, THE:** (1927)
- * **FREDO AND CON:** [George Fredo and his son Con] Musical/monologue act (1916, 1920). Played saxophone, xylophone, flute etc. George Fredo billed as a "Talking Novelty Musician" and "the Baron of Holland," American monologist and musician. NB: Not to be confused with the Fredo Boys.
 - * **FREDO BOYS, THE:** NZ contortionists/acrobats/dancers (1916) Two brothers. Their mother was one of the Fitzgerald Bros Circus' biggest ever stars. Their father was the first to introduce moving pictures to NZ regional centres, playing own shows ca.1896. Not to be confused with George Fredo/Fredo and Con.
- FREDONY:** [see Celere]
- FURGUS, HELEN:** [aka Helena Furgus] Actress (1909) Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909. Mother of Nellie Ferguson.

- GABRIEL, EDWARD 'TED':** NBT stage manager/scenery and staging (ca. 1917-29)
- GADABOUT B-HOYS, THE:** Comedians/dancers/singers. [Art Slavin, George Crotty, Will Carlyon] (ca.1917-18)
- GADABOUT GIRLS, THE:** (1917) Led by Dot De Vine.
- * **GAFFNEY, JIM:** Comic/dancer/singer (1907, 1913, 1917-19) NSW/Qld tour: 1913. Partnered Les Shipp 1913-17.
- GAFFNEY AND FARRELL:** (1909)
- GAIETY GIRLS:** Singers/dancers/revue chorus (1922, 1926-27)
- GAIETY SIX:** Singers/dancers/acrobatic poses/tumbling (1919) Aka Gaiety Six Beauties. Troupe consisted of the Two Estelles, Tilly and Doris, Iris Mancer, Violet Ruddell.
- GAINSFORD, JACK:** Singer (1920) Ex-jockey and trainer.
- * **GALE, MYRA:** Singer (1914, 1919) Mother of Sadie Gale.
 - * **GALE, SADIE:** Soubrette/singer (1914, 1919, 1921-22, 1929) Merrymakers Qld tour: 1929. Married to Roy Rene. Daughter of Sam and Myra Gale. Began performing as a young child for the Fuller and Tivoli circuits, including NZ. A member of the George Wallace Revue Co, 1925.
 - * **GALE AND SADIE:** [Sadie and Myra Gale] (1914, 1916) See also Sadie Gale. Mother and daughter act.
- GALL, DOROTHY:** Juvenile actor (1908) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908.
- GARDENIA:** Violinist. (1917) Billed as "the Wizard of the Violin."
- GARDNER, FRED:** (1916) Billed as "the musical lady."
- GARDNER, MAUD:** (1916-17)
- GARLAND, FRED:** Comic/singer/company manager (1920-22) Circuit manager in 1921.
- GARLAND, JOHN:** (1914)
- GARTI, SYD:** (1917)
- GASCOIGNE:** (1917)
- GAZZA TRIO, THE:** Pot pourri artists/jugglers (1915, 1919-20, 1926)
- GENEE, MADAME:** (1914)
- GENTLEMEN WAGS, THE:** (1923)
- GEORGE, R:** Actor (1915) Appeared in *Never Despair* and *Slaves of London* NBT 1915.
- * **GEORGE, WALTER (AND HIS SUNSHINE PLAYERS):** (1928) Toured Australia with Edward Brandscombe, incl. Smart Set and Dandies companies ca.1914-15 (managed both companies independent of Branscombe ca.1916-17). Smart Set included Bert Corrie, Doris Baker and Joe Verne (ca.1920) and Jim Gerald, Essie Jennings, Harry Ross, Vera Murray (ca.1921). Walter George headed the Fullers' "Novelettes" company (ca.1929), with Amy Rochelle and Rene Dixon in the troupe.
 - * **GEORGES, THE FIVE:** All girl troupe/singers/dancers/tumblers (1920-22, 1926-27). Pupils of Chrissie Royal. Vera Spraul, solo dancer with the troupe.
- GEORGES, THE SIX:** (1926)
- * **GIBSON AND DOREEN:** [husband and wife] Singers/dancers/patter/mandolins, xylophone, bells (1918, 1920) See also their children (Trixie and Buttons). Family tours Germany and other European centres ca.1924.
- GIBSON GIRLS, THE:** Soubrettes/dancers (1916)
- GIFFORD, VIOLET:** (1916)
- GILBERTO:** (1921)
- * **GILBERTS, THE:** [Will and Dora] Sketch artists/singers/dancers (1917-18, 1920-21, 1926) Aka The Two Gilberts.
 - * **GILBERT, DORA:** (1917-18, 1920-21, 1926) See also The Gilberts
 - * **GILBERT, WILL:** Comic (1909, 1912-21, 1926) NSW/Qld tours: 1909, 1912, 1916. Billed as "the human hairpin." See also the Gilberts / Delavale and Gilbert. Elected to an executive position with the A.V.A.F. (Australian Variety Artists Federation) ca.1915.
 - * **GILFAIN TRIO, THE:** (1918-19) Aka The Gilfains. One male and two females. Previously South Africa. Fullers ca.1918.
- GILHAM, IVY:** (1917)
- GILLETT:** (1925)
- GILLIARDI:** Juggler (1921)
- GILL, JIMMY:** (1927)
- GINGER BILL:** (1914)
- GLORY GIRL:** (1916-17) See also Emile Dani / Joe Charles.
- * **GODFREY'S DOGS AND MONKEYS, PROFESSOR:** (1916, 1920) Act included cockatoos and baboons. Godfrey was previously a lion and tiger trainer with 15 years in South Africa, mostly with the Fillis Circus.
- GOLD, NEVILLE:** (1919)
- GOLDEN DUO, THE:** (1918)
- * **GOLDING, CLAUDE:** Acrobatic comedian (1907, 1910) NSW/Qld tour: 1910. See also Keating and Golding. Described as having "thunderstorm vocal powers." Worked with comedian, Bert Corrie to ca.1910, and then with his wife Clara Keating (1910-c1919). Toured USA between 1911 and 1919. Died in the USA in 1919.
- GOLMRICH, ERN:** (1918)
- GONZALES, NINA:** ["Little Nina"] Serio/dancer (1902, 1905) NSW/Qld tours: 1902, 1905. Married to Joe Rox.
- GONZALES, STELLA:** Contortionist/serpentine acts (1902) NSW/Qld tour: 1902.

- GOODHOUSE AND OLIVER:** Singers/dancers/banjo (1920)
- GORDON AND LOTTIE:** (1922-23)
- GORDON, FAY:** Pianist (1925) Also partnered Lorrie Lorraine in piano/vocal act, 1925.
- GORDON, GLADYS:** Contralto (1915, 1918-20) Performed duets with Verna Latchem, 1919.
- GORDON AND LATCHEM:** (1920)
- GORDONS, THE FLYING:** Acrobats (1917)
- * **GORMAN, REV. FRANK:** Singer/comedian (1920, 1925, 1928) Billed as "The Singing Parson." Led his own revue company ca.1925. The troupe included Jake Mack.
- GOSWALD:** Musical clown (1917)
- GOUGH, IRENE:** Actor (1908) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908.
- GOULD, GLORIA:** (1918-19)
- GOULD, MARY:** Singer (1918)
- GOULD, NELLIE:** Singer/dancer (1918-19)
- GOURLEY AND SKINNER:** Dancer (1918)
- * **GOURLEY, KATIE:** Dancer/singer (1919, 1922-25) Scottish artist billed as 'the Heather Belle.' Also partnered Bert Corrie in 1925.
- GOURLEY, THELMA:** Singer/dancer (1920)
- * **GRAHAM, CONNIE:** Soubrette (1921-23, 1925-27) See also Scott and Graham, 1922-27.
- GRAHAM, DOUGLAS:** Scotch comedian (1916, 1920-21) Performed Scottish dances and played pipes.
- GRAHAM, ELLEN:** (1916)
- GRAHAM, HARTLEY:** Female impersonator (1915)
- GRAHAM, LILLIAN:** Soprano (1918)
- GRAHAM, NELLIE:** (1916)
- GRAHAM AND GRAHAM:** (1922)
- GRAY, JESSIE:** Pianist/M Dir. (1907) NSW/Qld tour: 1907. Ex-Frank M. Clark pianist. M Dir. Bijou (Melb) 1915 / Adelphi (Melb), 1916.
- GRAY, ROSE:** [Rose Rooney] Australian actress/revue artist/singer. Played lead roles in such Australian films as *The Kelly Gang* and *The Man They Could Not Hang*. Also appeared in the original stage production of *Possum Paddock*.
- * **GRAY, YORKE:** Female impersonator/revue writer (1917-19) [Gray is frequently spelt Grey] Wrote *Squashed*, NBT 1919. Previously England and USA / 3 years with Moss and Stoll / 4 years with George Edwards in musical comedy / Fullers 1920.
- GRAY AND ANGUS:** Dancers (1918)
- GREAT SCOTT:** (1914) [family of three]
- GREEN, BILLY:** (1922)
- GREEN, MAURICE:** (1916) Appeared with Stanley McKay's Pantomime Co, 1916.
- GREENE, GENE:** (1914)
- GREENWOOD, REG:** English light comics/tenor/interlocutor (1918-21) Mngr. Harry Clay's No 4 Company, 1920.
- * **GRESHAMS, THE:** Dancers (1914, 1916-17, 1919) Aka The Gresham Duo/Three Greshams. Appeared with Stanley McKay's Pantomime Co, 1916.
- GREY, MARCELLA:** Specialty act/skipping rope dancers (1914)
- GRIFFOS, THE TWO:** (1919)
- GUEST, RUBY:** Banjo/steel guitar (1921) Previously a music teacher, Mt Morgan (Qld) ca.1919.
- GUILLAUME BABY AND CO:** Toreador act (1915)
- GWYNNE, W:** Actor. (1914) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, NBT, 1914.
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- HAGEN, WILL:** Comedian/dancer/singer (1915) Son of Martyn Hagan and Lucy Fraser.
- HAGONS, THE THREE:** Roman rings/hand to hand balancing (1927)
- HAL:** Comic/juggler (1916, 1922) Billed as "the juggling jester." Straightman for the Hennessy-Martell team.
- HALL, DULCIE:** (1914)
- HALL, NELLIE:** Singer (1916, 1921-22)
- HALL, WILLIAM:** (1917)
- HAMMOND, MARJORIE:** Soprano (1918-19)
- * **HANCO:** [Sam Hanco] Escapologist (1916) Aka "Hanco the Great."
- HANLEY AND DALE:** Musical comedy duo (1916-17) [Hanley and Dale ?]
- * **HANLEY, NAT 'BLUEY':** Singer/dancer/comic/pianist/patter artist/revue producer (1914-19, 1922, 1929) Renowned for playing the piano with white gloves. Partnered Muriel Dale, 1917 / Arthur Elliott, 1922. A senior member of George H. Ward's Zigzag Revue Co during the mid-to-late 1920s.
- HANSEN, LESLIE:** (1922)

- HAPPY HOTTENTOTS, THE:** (1922)
- HARDIE, EMMIE:** (1916-18) Aka Emmie Hardie and Her Teddy Bear.
- HARDIE SISTERS, THE:** (1916)
- HARDIMAN, JACK:** Pianist/M Dir. (1909-10) NSW/Qld tours: 1909, 1910. M Dir. for Charles Stanford's Dramatic Co (Clay's Royal Standard, Sydney, 1910).
- HARDING, FLO:** (1915)
- HAREM SCAREM GIRLS, THE:** (1924)
- HARIANS, THE TWO:** Acrobatics/gymnastics (1917, 1919) Two Adelaide boys.
- * **HARLANS, THE:** Balancing act/trapeze/double trapeze (1917) Aka The Gymnastic Harlans / The Balancing Harlans / The Wonderful Harlans (ca.1917).
- HARLEY, DAISY:** Wire walker (1916)
- HARLEY, WILL:** Acrobat/comic/singer (1907) NSW/Qld tour: 1907. Partnered Ruby Franklin in sketches.
- HARMONIOUS THREE, THE:** [Harry Clay, Maurice Chenoweth, Arthur Morley] (1917)
- HARMONY FOUR, THE:** Female singers/instrumentalists/dancers (1919-22, 1924) Aka The Harmonious Four. Appeared with The Royal Musical Comedy Co, 191 (the group consisted of Rene and Trixie Ireland, Rita Sullivan and Ivy Gailer).
- HARMONY THREE, THE:** Jugglers/singers/dancers (1921) Aka The Harmony Trio. Students of Eileen Charters (Syd).
- HARMSTON'S COCKATOOS:** (1922)
- HARPER, JACK:** (1928)
- HARPER, ROBERTO:** Singer. (1914)
- HARRIGAN THE GREAT:** Musical magician/mind reading/banjo player (1915, 1917-18)
- HARRIS, LOU:** (1920) Known to be working in England ca.1920.
- HARRISON, HARRY:** Ventriloquist (1915)
- HARRISON, REG:** (1915)
- * **HART, HAZEL:** English soubrette (1923-24)
- * **HART, LULU:** Singer/dancer (1919)
- HART AND KENNY:** Duettists (1916)
- HARTLEY, FLORENCE:** Balladist (1916) See also the Revellers.
- HARTLEY, FLORENCE:** (1916)
- HARVEY, FRANK:** (1914)
- HARVEY, LILY:** Pantomime actress (1911) Clay/McKay Qld pantomime tour, 1911.
- HARVEY, JOHN:** (1914)
- * **HARWOOD-ADERS TRIO:** [NZ turn] (1925) Played silver chimes.
- * **HASTINGS, WILL:** Comic (1925) Part owner of the Gallipoli Strollers company ca.1925. Troupe included Will Leslie. Broadcasting on Australian radio ca.1925.
- HATHAWAY, GEORGE:** Comic (1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1927.
- HATHERLEY, FRANK:** (1917)
- HATTON BOYS, THE:** Acrobats/wire walkers (1927) Ages 9-14. One child walked up a wire from the stage to the dome of the theatre.
- HAVERLY, TOM:** (1919) Operated his own revusical company ca.1917. Tutor for the Gaiety Six, 1919.
- HAWAIIAN MUSICAL TEAM, THE:** (1925)
- HAWTHORNE, FRANK:** (1916)
- HAYES, CHECK:** (1922, 1927)
- HAYES, FRED:** [Freddy] singer (1921-22) Billed as "the ragtime boy." See also Eileen Cox.
- HAYES, FRED AND EILLEN COX:** Singers/"jazzedies" (1921)
- * **HAYMAN, IRVE AND CO:** (1916)
- HAYS AND STAGPOOLE:** (1928)
- HAYWARD, CHARLES:** (1917)
- HAZELDEAN, ANNETTE:** (1920)
- HEANEY, DICK:** Singer/NBT manager (approx 20 year association with Harry Clay) Often described as "Harry Clay's right-hand man." Known to have performed at the NBT in 1916.
- HEARNES, THE:** (1922-23)
- HEARNE, HAL:** (1921)
- HEATHCOTE, WYN:** (1920)
- * **HEDLEY, TOM:** Musical act (1907, 1916) NSW/Qld tour: 1907. Billed as the Musical Moke. Hedley's act was accompanied by a moke (being a donkey or 'poor horse'), which would rear up and show its disgust whenever Hedley played a wrong note. Played xylophone, one-stringed fiddle, accordion, kettle-drum, glass bottles. He guaranteed to play any instrument brought to him by anyone in the audience, and was known to play 'Home Sweet Home' on a lamppost.
- HELLER, JACK:** Acrobat/singer (1910, 1914-15, 1920) See also Heller and Rickardo/Heller and Weller.
- HELLER AND RICKARDO:** [Wally Rickardo and Jack Heller] Acrobats (1915)
- HELLER AND WELLER:** [Jack Heller and ? Weller] Acrobats (1910, 1914)
- HENDERSON, FLORENCE:** Specialty act with dogs and monkeys (1915)

- HENRY, FRANK:** (1922)
- HENRY, KATE:** [Catherine (Kate) Clay] Contralto (1901-1905) NSW/Qld tours: 1901, 1903, 1905.
- HENRY, MADEMOISELLE:** (1916)
- * **HERBERTE, FRANK:** Baritone/IS (1906-10, 1914, 1916, 1922) NSW/Qld tours: 1906, 1908, 1910.
 - * **HERBERTE, TED:** Character vocalist/actor (1915-16, 1918, 1920) Fullers ca.1902 (Empire). S Mngr/Mngr. for Bert Howard ca.1918.
- HERMAN:** (1915)
- HERNES, THE TWO:** (1923)
- HERRON, GEORGE:** (1914)
- HICKEY AND CREBER:** Juvenile performers (1917)
- HICKEY AND ROSE:** (1918)
- HIGGINS, MARK:** Advance rep (1916) NSW/Qld tour: 1916.
- HILL, JILL:** Comic actor/singer (1917, 1919) Also worked with George Lennon, 1917.
- HILTON, GUS:** Actor (1916) Engaged for Stanley McKay's Pantomime Co, 1916.
- HILTON, LILLIAN:** (1922)
- HINE, ?:** (1925)
- HINTONS, THE:** (1919) Aka The Six Hintons [five females and one male] Incl. Maudie Arteen and Daphne Hill (Arteens and Jessie). See also The Arteens
- HITCHINGS, BARRY:** Baritone (1917) Formerly with the New York Four.
- HOLDER, GEORGE:** (1921, 1926)
- HOLLAND, FRITZ:** Novelty music act (1916-17) Billed as "The boxer who fought Les Darcy."
- HOLLY BALLET, THE:** (1917)
- HOLMES, ADELE:** Actress (1914-15) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT, 1914.
- HOLMES, GLADYS:** Singer/dancer/contortionist (1919-21)
- HOLMES, JACK:** Tenor singer (1924)
- HORAN, FLO:** (1917)
- HOWARD, BERT:** Manager/doorman/entrepreneur (ca.1901-05) Aka "The Droll." Worked for Harry Clay for around five years (ca.1901-1916). Ran his own circuit in Sydney between around 1912/13 and up until at least the early 1930s. Advertised in 1913 as Bert Howard's Enterprises.
- HOWARD, ENID:** (1923)
- * **HOWARD, JESSIE AND LITTLE STELLA:** [Scottish mother and daughter act] Singers/dancers (1916-17) Jessie Howard believed to have been known as Jessie Lee in 1916.
- HOWARD BROTHERS, THE MYSTERIOUS:** (1917) Ex-Fitzgerald Bros Circus.
- HOWARDE, WILL:** (1916)
- HOWARDS, THE:** [aka The Two Clever Dancing Howards/The Howard Sisters] (1921)
- HOWE, HARRY:** (pre 1917) Information sourced from death notice in AV: Oct. 1917, n. pag.) Act known as Harry Howe and Ethel.
- HOWELL, ERIC:** (1918)
- HUDSON, SAM:** (1923)
- HUGGARD, EILEEN:** M Dir./pianist (1916-19)
- HUGHES, EVA:** Serio/soubrette (1907-08, 1910) NSW/Qld tour: 1908.
- HULBERT, LILY:** Mezzo-soprano (1906) NSW/Qld tour: 1906
- * **HULEY, HARRY:** English comic (1924) See also Huley and Bent.
 - * **HULEY AND BENT:** [Harry Huley and Brenda Bent] English comedy artists (1923-24) Fullers 1920.
 - * **HUNTER, MAYO:** Hawaiian jazz band leader (1923-25) See also Mayo Hunter and Harris (1925). Initially appeared in Australia with the Original Royal Hawaiians and Pacific Entertainers. Circa 1923 teaching steel guitar, banjo, ukulele, banjo and mandolin (Syd). Recorded guitar records in Australia ca.1928.
- HUNTER, WILL:** (1915) NSW/Qld tour: 1915
- HUNTER, WINFIELD:** Actor (1909) Engaged for Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909.
- HURBON, LITTLE LILY:** Contortion/trapeze/acrobatics (1919) Pupil of the Arteens, described as "the Wonder Child" and "the Human Frog."
- HURST, MARIE:** (1919) Engaged by Dick Montague's Pierrots, 1919.
- HYDE, BETTY:** Singer (1914) Also partnered Will Manners, 1914.
- HYMAN-URENS, THE:** Jugglers, comedy team (1919) Billed as the "Famous Four." Three jugglers, one comic, worked with Indian clubs.

- IBEX:** Shadowgraphist. (1915)
IBSENS, THE: Musical artists (1916)
IMPERIALS, THE FOUR: (1922-23)
IKE AND MAURIE: (1922)
INMAN, ROBERT: Actor (1914-15) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT, 1914.
INO, UNO AND MUNRO: (1922)
IRELAND AND BILTON: (1919)
* **IRELAND, DOT:** Ball puncher (1915-16) Billed as Australia's champion lady ball puncher.
* **IRELAND, RENE:** Singer (1921) [sister of Trixie] See also The Harmony Four.
* **IRELAND, TRIXIE:** Soprano (1919-21) [sister of Rene Ireland] See also The Harmony Four. On stage partner and wife of Dinks Paterson.
IVEL, IVY: (1927)
IVELLS, THE FOUR: (1925)
IVERSON, STAN: (1927)
- JACK, UNO:** (1917) Billed as the "Handy Man."
JACK AND OLGA: (1926)
* **JACKSONS, THE THREE:** Equilibrists/acrobats (1921, 1923) Man, woman and boy. Tivoli engagement ca.1924.
JACQUES, KITTY: (1918)
JAFFAY, MAURICE: (1926)
JAMES, GLADYS: (1922)
JAMES, TED: Comic (1917)
* **JAMES, WILL:** Banjo player (1916-17) Booked for Tivoli from England pre-1914.
JAMIESON, WALTER: Singer (1917)
* **JANSEN, MATTIE:** Patterologist/comic (1914-17, 1926-27) NSW/Qld tour: 1917. See also Desmond and Jansen.
JARGE AND BURT: (1922)
* **JARVIS, IDA:** Soubrette/serio/dancer (1911, 1913-14, 1917-20) NSW/Qld tours: 1911, 1913, 1918.
JAYS, THE: Acrobats (1924)
JEACLE, PAUL: (1914)
JENNER, ARTHUR: Singer (1918-19)
* **JENNINGS, ESSIE:** Soprano/IS (1909) NSW/Qld tour, 1909. Married to Jim Gerald. Appeared with Stanley McKay's pantomime company ca.1914-16 (along with Jim Gerald).
JERRY AND NOBBLER: [two dogs] (1920)
JESSIE THE WONDER DOG: (1917)
JEWELLS, THE TWO: Soubrettes (1917)
JOHNS, GERTIE: (1914-15)
JOHNS, URSULA: Soprano (1920)
JOHNSONS, THE: [incl. Rosie and Josie] Dancing serios (1914-15, 1921-23) Aka Four Johnsons / The Two Johnsons.
JOHNSONS, THE NINE AMAZING: Child act (1926) Appeared in *Puss in Boots* pantomime.
* **JOHNSTON, LAWRENCE:** American ventriloquist (1928)
JOHNSTON, RITA: (1918)
JOHNSTON, TIM: (1916)
* **JOLLY MARIE:** English comedienne (1916, 1918)
JONAS, ALFREDO: Singer/piano accordion (1927)
JONES AND RAINE: (1927)
JONES, BLANCHE: (1927)
JONES, HARRY: Singer. (1919)
JONES, HEATHER: (1923)
JONES, MARIE: (1915)
JONES, SYDNEY: (1916)
JOULD, NELLIE: (1918)
JUINE, GRACE: (1915)
JULES AND MARZON: [Fred Jules and Fred Marzon] strength and balance act (1912) NSW/Qld tour: 1912.
* **JULLIAN:** French comic/cartoon artist (1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1927. Billed as the "Komedie Kartoonist."
JULLYAN, VIOLET: Soubrette/singer (1914, 1918) See also Vesto and Jullyan. Originally from Melbourne.
JUNE, ALICE: (1918)
JUST PEGGY: (1920-21)

- KADAMAS, THE:** (1914)
- KALMAS, THE THREE:** Wire-walkers (1922) Billed as "wonders on the wire."
- KANGAROOSTA:** (see Reg Thornton)
- KAIMO:** Magician/musician (1927-28) Billed as 'the wizard of banjo and mandolin.
- KANDY KIDS:** (1928)
- KANWA:** Magician (1921)
- KAVELLIO:** [see Frank Cane]
- KAY, FLORRIE:** (1920)
- * **KAYS, THE:** Trick cyclists (1914) NSW/Qld tour: 1914. Aka Two Kays. Billed as the "Kings of the Wheel."
 - KAY SISTERS, THE:** [Peggy and Topsy] comics (1920-22) Aka Kay and Kay, 1921.
 - KAYS-PRICE, EDITH:** Pantomime actress (1911) Harry Clay/Stanley McKay Qld pantomime tour, 1911
 - * **KEALY, FRED:** (1915)
 - * **KEARNS, JACK "PORKY":** Comic/singer/female impersonator (1914, 1916, 1918-22) Partner with Harry Sadler, Princess Theatre 1916-17. Married to Ida Tauchert (minstrel singer) and sister of Arthur Tauchert. Father of Vera Kearns.
 - * **KEARNS, VERA:** Character singer (1914,1916) Daughter of Jack Kearns.
 - KEARNS, WILLIAM:** (1916)
 - * **KEATING, CLARA:** Singer/comedian (1907, 1909-1910, 1926, 1929) NSW/Qld tour, 1910 (with Claude Golding). Described as 5 feet tall and "with a carload of pep." Toured USA between 1911 and 1919 with Claude Golding, and 1920 with Harry Ross.
 - * **KEATING AND GOLDING:** [Clara Keating and Claude Golding, husband and wife team] (1909-10) NSW/Qld tour: 1910. Toured USA extensively between 1911 and 1919.
 - * **KEATING AND ROSS:** [Clara Keating and Harry Ross, husband and wife team] (1926-27) Partnership formed in USA ca. 1920 following the death of Keating's former partner, Claude Golding.
 - * **KEE AND LEE:** Chinese acrobats (1917)
 - KEEFE, CLIFF:** Baritone (1915)
 - KEELY, FRED:** (1916-17) Also partnered Ivy Aldous as Keely and Aldous. Keely and Aldous appeared with the Harry Burgess Revue Company ca.1919.
 - KEILDELSON, THE GREAT:** (1914)
 - KEITH, LAWRENCE:** (1917)
 - KEITH'S SYNCOPATING JESTERS:** Comedy jazz band (1926-27) Aka "Keith's Merry Jesters." Billed as presenting jazzmania and funniosities.
 - * **KELDINE AND KILMO:** [Bill Keldine and Fred Klimo] trick cyclists and comedy artists (1920, 1927)
 - KELDINE AND SPEED:** [Bill Keldine and Billy Speed] Trick cyclists and comedy artists (1915)
 - KELL SISTERS, THE:** (1917)
 - KELLY AND ALDOUS:** Patter/singers (1917)
 - KELROY AND KALMA:** (1917)
 - KELROY TRIO, THE:** (1922-23) Aka The Kelroys.
 - * **KELSO, LES:** Singing and patter artist (1915)
 - KEMP, NELLIE:** (1928)
 - KEMP'S BUCKJUMPING PONY:** (1917) [pony - "Tipperary"]
 - KENDALL, GEORGE:** (1918)
 - KENNEDY, RUBY:** (1920)
 - KENNEDY AND CO:** (1918)
 - KENNY AND HART:** Duettists (1916-17)
 - KENNY, WILL:** (1917)
 - KENT, ROY:** Melbourne comic/impersonator (1920) Known for his little girl impersonations.
 - KERLINES, THE:** (1916)
 - KERR, ANDY:** Bookmaker/theatre manager and lessee/entrepreneur/*Australian Variety* manager (1919 -)
 - * **KERRIDGE, STAN:** Singer/manager (1907, 1910, 1928) NSW/Qld tour, 1907, 1910. Mngr. NBT, 1924-29.
 - KERRY, MAY:** Contralto (1918)
 - KEVELLO:** [Frank Cane] shadowography (1920)
 - * **KING, FRANK:** Descriptive/dramatic singer (1908) NSW/Qld tour: 1906. Toured USA with Pearl Lovell, ca.1927.
 - KING, GRACE:** (1922)
 - KING, HAL:** Eccentric dancer/step dance (1920-21)
 - KING, MOLLY:** (1915)
 - * **KINGS, THE FOUR:** Female acrobatic singers/dancers (1915-18) NSW/Qld tour: 1918. Students of Chrissie Royal.
 - * **KINGSLEY AND GRAHAM:** [Syd Kingsley and Lenore Graham] (1917) Also teachers of variety performing ca.1925. Studio in Empress building, George Street Sydney.
 - KIRK, ANDREW:** (1918)

- * **KITCHIE AND KLIFTIE:** Acrobats/comics (1915-20, 1922) Aka Kluffy and Kliffy/Klitie and Kitchie, ca.1918-19. See also Toohey and Kitchie, 1914.
- KLARDY BOYS, THE:** (1916)
- * **KLIMO, FRED:** Acrobatic clown (1920-21) See also Keldine and Klimo.
- KLINTO AND MACK:** Acrobats (1916)
- KLINTO AND WADE:** Novelty acrobats (1917, 1920)
- KLINTOS BOYS, THE:** Comic acrobats/hand balancing (1916-18)
- KNIBBS, J.T:** M Dir. (1920) Gaiety Theatre (Syd)
- KNOWLES, JIM:** Musical tongue twister (1921)
- KODAMAS, THE:** (1910)
- * **KOLLE, NELLIE:** English descriptive vocalist/pianist/male impersonator (1922, 1926-27) NSW/Qld tour: 1927. Toured in 1927 as the headline artist.
- KNIGHT, LILLIE:** (1915)
- * **KNIGHT, WINNIE:** Soubrette/comedienne [wife of Bert Le Blanc] (1917) Born Winifred Walls in Newcastle.
- KRANK, THE:** Trick cyclist (1910)

LA BELLE MARIE: [Marie Charlbert (nee Sole)] Trapeze/equilibrist (1919). Daughter of Mrs Sole (Sole Brothers Circus) / married to one of the Charlbert Brothers.

LAIDLAW, JAMES: (1916)

LALIOR AND YVONNE: (1917)

LAMBERT, CHRIS: (1910)

LAMBERTS, THE TWO: (1916)

- * **LA MERT, SAM:** Artistic whistler/imitations. (1915) See also the La Merts.

- * **LA MERTS, THE:** [incl. Sam La Mert] (1916)

LAMOND, GEORGE: (1919)

LAMONT, ROSALIE: (1919)

LANE AND HOWARD: (1923)

LANE, MRS BARRY: Actor (1908) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908.

LANG, MARY: Actor (1909) Engaged for Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909.

LANG, ANNETTE: [see Sharrett and Lang]

LANGRIDGE, JOY: [Joyce] (1921-22)

- * **LA PERLE:** Acrobat/contortionist (1917)

LA PETITE ESTELLE AND ALMA SKINNER: (1924)

- * **LARKIN, "JOLLY" JOHN:** Black American comic/singer (1918, 1920)

LA ROSE AND LA ROSE: Trapeze/comic acrobatics and equilibrists (1921) See also Desperado and La Rose, ca.1918.

- * **LASHWOOD AND REMBY:** [Joe Lashwood and Kitty Remby] (1914)

- * **LASHWOOD, JOE:** Comic/cornerman/bones (1909-10, 1914-15, 1917-20, 1922) Also partnered Kitty Remby. Spruiker, Gaiety Theatre 1919-20.

LATCHEM, VERA: Singer (1919) Performed duets with Gladys Gordon.

- * **LATEENS, THE:** (1915, 1918)

LAURENCE, ADA: Actor (1908) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908.

- * **LAURI, ERNEST:** Brisbane tenor/monologues and stories to pictures and music. (1917, 1919-20). Ex-Birch and Carroll Co / Fullers. Billed as the "Famous Singing Anzac" ca.1919.

LAURIE, ROMO: Actor. (1909) Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909.

- * **LAWMAN, JOE:** Comic/whistler (1927). Partnered Nat Phillips as Stiffy and Joe after the Rene/Phillips partnership dissolved. Married to Stella Lamond, father of Toni Lamond.

LAVERN, IRIS: (1916)

LAVIN, JACK: Comic (1922)

- * **LAZERN, EMILE:** Magician/illusionist (1914-17) Toured the East ca.1920s and played by the Tivoli and Fullers circuits. Renowned for his beer making trick in which audience members attempted to out drink his magic bottle. Died Sept/Oct 1928, a few months after his wife, May (herself a vaudeville and picture show pianist).

- * **LEAR, WARD:** Comic/Chinese impersonator (1913-14, 1916-17, 1920-21)

LEAH, WUNG: Chinese act from Hong Kong (1920)

- * **LE BLANC, BERT:** Hebrew comedian/revue company producer/singer (1921-22) First toured Australia in 1913-14 with the American Burlesque Co. Worked the Fullers circuit 1914 onwards. Opened two theatres for the Fullers, and rivaled Roy Rene and Nat Phillips as one of Australia's premiere comedians and revue company leaders. Le Blanc was often written La Blanc during his early years in Australia. Long association with Jake Mack.

- LE BRUN:** Skater. (1914)
- LEE, GUS:** (1920)
- * **LEE-ALDONS, THE THREE:** Singers/dancers (1914-16) Engaged for Stanley McKay Pantomime Co, 1914.
 - * **LEE, JESSIE:** (1903, 1916-17) NSW/Qld tour, 1903. Partnered her daughter Little Stella, 1916. Believed to be the same person as in Jessie Howard and Little Stella, ca.1917.
- LEIGH, DAPHNE:** (1916) Engaged with Stanley McKay's pantomime NBT, *Bo-Peep* 1916.
- LEIGH, GLADYS:** Actress (1914-15) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT 1914; *Never Despair* and *Slaves of London*, NBT 1915.
- LEMAR GIRLS, THE:** (1923)
- * **LE MOUNIER:** Physical guitarist (1920) Billed as an Australian performer.
- LENNON, GEORGE:** Comic actor (1917) Also worked with Jill Hill, 1917.
- LENNON AND HILL:** (1916)
- LENNONS, THE:** [George and Gertie Lennon] Sketch artists/comics (1917)
- LEO AND ALEXIA:** Sharp shooters/greyhound jumping (1921) Their greyhound accomplished a record jump of 9'2" in June 1921 at the Gaiety.
- LEO AND LIONEL:** (1915)
- LEONARD, ARTHUR:** (1915)
- * **LEONARD, TOM:** Cornerman/singer/topical comedian/song writer (1906, 1909, 1910-11, 1914, 1916) NSW/Qld tours: 1906, 1909, 1911. Began career as a juvenile singer/known for rag songs. Earliest known engagement was in 1904 at the Tivoli (Syd). Often billed as "the old man with the new stuff" ca.1914.
- LEONARD AND HILL:** Sketch artists (1916)
- LEONARDI:** Instrumentalist (1916) Billed as the 'man of many instruments.'
- * **LEONARD'S DOGS:** [aka Leonard's White Poodles] (1916-19)
- LEOPARD, ARTHUR:** Actor (1914-15) Appeared in *Humanity* NBT, 1914/15.
- LEOPOLD, DOLLY:** (1920)
- LEROY, GEORGE:** Actor (1914-15) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT 1914; *Never Despair* and *Slaves of London*, NBT 1915.
- LES FRANCOIS:** Hand balancing troupe (1917)
- LES NORS:** Dog act, with six white poodles (1914)
- LES ZENGA FRERES:** French dancers of an eccentric nature (1925)
- LESLIE, AMY:** Contralto (1902) NSW/Qld tour: 1902.
- LESLIE, NORMAN:** Singer (1921)
- LESLIE, VICTOR:** Actor (1914-15) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT 1914; *Never Despair* and *Slaves of London*, NBT 1915.
- * **LESLIE, WILL:** Comedy instrumentalist. (1920, 1926) Among his instruments were cattle bells. Formerly partnered brother Fred in the Leslie Brothers ca.1890s. They spent 20 years in the UK and Europe. Born in 1860.
- LESLIE AND CO:** (1915)
- * **LESTER, BESSIE:** American comic/soubrette (1920-21, 1923, 1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1927. Aka Bessie Lester and the Melody Maid, 1923. Often performed as a headline act with Clay's.
- LESTER, MAUD:** (1920)
- * **LESTON, HARRY:** Actor/monologist (1914-1915) Renowned Australian character actor and teacher, whose career began in the early 1880s as a pantomime actor. Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT 1914; *Slaves of London* NBT 1915.
- * **LEVANTE:** [Les Cole] Magician (1919) Aka Magician Cole.
 - * **LEVARTO, MADAME:** (1916) NSW/Qld tour, 1916. Referred to in advertising as "the female Paderewski."
 - * **LEVARTO, PHIL:** Comic/juggler/specialty act (1916-18, 1920) NSW/Qld tour: 1916. Toured northern NSW with Joe Archer, 1914. Engaged by Lloyd's Circus, ca.1925.
- LEVARTO AND SPEED:** [Phil Levarto and Billy Speed] (1914) See also Keldine and (Billy) Speed.
- * **LEVARTOS, THE:** (1916)
- LEWIS, CHARLES:** (1925)
- LEWIS, GORDON:** Baritone (1919-20)
- LEWIS, MAY:** Singer (1916, 1919, 1922)
- LEY, UNA:** Singer (1919)
- LEYFIELD, BLANCHE:** Serio/comic/dancer (1905) NSW/Qld tour: 1905.
- LIDDLE, WILL:** NZ singer/interlocutor (1918-19) Described as a romantic-looking interlocutor.
- LILIPUTIAN GORDOUS:** (1919)
- LILY:** (1919) Billed as "The Human Frog."
- LINCO:** Magician (1915-18, 1920) Aka The Two Lincos.
- LINDEN, VI:** (1920)
- LINDEN AND BERRIDGE:** (1923-24)
- LIPTON, DAN:** Comic singer (1922)

- LITTLE DAISY:** Actress (1914) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT, 1914.
- * **LITTLE, HARRY:** Tenor (1913-14, 1916, 1918-19, 1925-28) NSW/Qld tours: 1913, 1914. Appeared in Stanley McKay's panto NBT, *Bo-Peep* 1916.
- LITTLE MABEL:** (1921)
- LITTLE, MARSH:** (1922)
- * **LITTLE MAISIE:** (1920) Aged nine years ca.1919/20. Engaged by Fullers, 1919.
- LITTLE MONA:** (1920)
- LITTLE NELLIE:** (1917)
- * **LITTLES, THE PICTORIAL:** [Joe, and daughter Flo] Lightning sketch artists/singers (1917, 1919-20). Joe painted as lights were switched on and off suddenly. The daughter sang during the act.
- LITTLE ROY:** [see Joe Cowan]
- LITTLE SADIE:** (1921)
- * **LITTLE VERLIE:** Juvenile acrobat/contortionist (1916-17) Also worked with Wee Darrell, 1917.
- LITTLE WILLY:** Midget comedian/bones/patter/singer (1907, 1919)
- LIVINGSTON, GEORGE:** Singer/patterologist (1918)
- LIVINSTONE, PEARL:** Serio/soubrette (1910-11, 1915-16) NSW/Qld tour: 1911.
- LLEWELLYN AND HIS DOGS:** [Mitch and Larry] (1920) Billed as the only dog act known to choose, announce and perform tricks without human commands.
- LLOYD, BOB:** (1909, 15-16) Also partnered Nellie Power.
- LLOYD, CLARE:** (1910, 1917)
- LLOYD, GEORGE:** Comic/dancer (1926-27)
- LLOYD AND POWER:** [Bob Lloyd and Merle Power] (1916)
- LLOYD AND RAYMOND:** Dancers (1919) Incl. simultaneous dance act.
- LOADERS:** Sketch artists. (1916)
- LOCKWOOD, HAROLD:** Lariat spinner (1921, 1923) Engaged by Ridgway's Circus, ca.1925.
- LODGE:** Female impersonator (1916, 1918)
- LOMAS, AMY:** (1921)
- LONG, LETTY:** (1916)
- LOON, LEE CHEE:** (1922)
- LORENE, MADAME:** Actor (1914)
- LORNA AND LANCE:** (1924, 1926)
- LORNE, IDA:** (1917)
- LORNE, LOTTIE:** Singer (1904) NSW/Qld tour: 1904.
- LORRAINE, FLORRIE:** (1914, 1916)
- LORRAINE, LAURIE:** Syncopated singer (1921-22, 1925, 1927) Partnered Fay Gordon, 1925.
- LORRAINE, VIOLET:** (1914) Sister of Mercia Morrison.
- LORRAINE SISTERS, THE:** (1916)
- LORRAINE'S POSING MODELS:** (1916)
- LORRAYNES, THE THREE:** (1927)
- LOVELL AND NOLAN:** [Alf Nolan and Nell Lovell] (1914)
- LOVELL, PEARL:** Serio (1908) NSW/Qld tour, 1908. Toured USA in 1927 with Frank King.
- LOVERTON, R:** Actor. (1914) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT, 1914.
- LOYOLA, GRACE:** (1916)
- * **LOYOLA, MADGE:** Singer/dancer/soubrette (1916, 1918-20). Impersonator of popular Clay's artists (George Sorlie, Ted Stanley, Phillip Sisters) Toured the USA, 1920.
- LUBOWSKI, DANIEL AND ANNA:** Child instrumentalists (1920). Daniel played violin, and their selections ranged between Chopin and ragtime. Anna accompanied on the piano.
- LUCAS, ALBERT:** Actor (1908) Engaged for Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908
- LUMLEY AND RHODES:** Patterologists (1916)
- LUMLEY, WARWICK:** Comic/writer (1909, 1910) NSW/Qld tour: 1909. See also Winifred & Lumley.
- LYALL, DORA:** Chic serio (1912, 1914, 1925) NSW/Qld tour: 1912 (with sister Mazie). See also Lyall Sisters.
- LYALL, MAZIE:** Specialty artist. (1912) NSW/Qld tour: 1912 (with sister Dora). See also Lyall Sisters.
- LYALL SISTERS:** [Dora and Mazie] Specialty artists. (1912)
- LYNCH, MAURICE:** Actor (1914-15, 1917) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT 1914; *Never Despair* and *Slaves of London*, NBT 1915.
- LYNDON, ALMA:** Serio/dancer (1907) NSW/Qld tour: 1907
- LYNDONS, THE MUSICAL:** (1926)
- LYNNE, BARRY:** (1915)
- LYNNE, HILDA:** (1915)
- LYRIC DUO, THE:** Singers/dancers (1921)

- McALISTER, ALEX:** Tenor (1920)
- McCABE AND DEAN:** [Molly McCabe and Florrie Dean] dancers. (1918)
- McCABE, MOLLY:** Dancer (1915, 1918) See also McCabe and Dean.
- McCARTHY, LEN:** (1919)
- McCOLL FAMILY, THE:** (1916-17, 1920-21) Aka The Wee McColls / The Two McColls / The Three McColls.
- McCORMACK, JOHN:** (1915-16)
- McCULLUM, RONNIE AND POLLY:** (1917)
- McDONALD, BEATTIE:** (1909, 1914-15, 1918)
- McDONALD, SADIE:** Violin/contortion/acrobatic dance act (1921, 1926, 1928)
- McDONNA, HARRY:** (1916) Appeared with Stanley McKay's Pantomime Co, 1916.
- McEWAN, THE GREAT:** (1914)
- McGOWAN, JACK:** Baritone (1917) From Victoria. Principal comedian with Bohemian Dramatic Co, ca.1914.
- McGRAPH, CLIVE:** (1917)
- McGREGOR:** [MacGregor ?] Wire work (1923)
- McGREGOR, JOCK:** Singer (1919-20) Aka Wee Jock McGregor. Billed as "the juvenile Lauder."
- McGUIRE, ELSIE:** Singer (1910) NSW/Qld tour: 1910.
- MacINTYRE, A. T.:** Theatregraph operator (1905, 1907) NSW/Qld tours: 1905, 1907.
- McKAY, JAMES:** Pantomime actor (1911) Toured with Harry Clay/St Stanley McKay Bo-Peep Qld tour: 1911.
- MacKAY, PERCY:** Singer (1915-16)
- McKAY, STANLEY:** Actor/theatrical entrepreneur (1911, 1916). Founded the Sydney Muffs amateur theatre company, ca.1903.
Harry Clay/St Stanley McKay pantomime tour of Qld, 1911. Stanley McKay Pantomime Co / Sydney Muffs amateur theatre company to ca.1909.
- * **MacKAY, WALTER 'HATS':** American comic/instrumentalist (1918, 1921-22, 1925) Billed as "the funny man from Honolulu."
Played banjo, steel guitar.
- McKELLOR, AVOL:** Singer/dancer (1916-17, 1919) See also Black and White Duo, with Iris Mancer.
- MacKINNON BOYS, THE:** (1928)
- McLEOD AND SHARP:** (1909)
- McLEOD AND SKINNER:** (1909)
- McLEAN AND DRURY:** Whirling dancers (1918)
- McLENNON, ESMEE:** Pantomime actress (1911) Toured with Harry Clay/St Stanley McKay *Bo-Peep* Qld tour, 1911. Appeared with Stanley McKay's Pantomime Co, 1916.
- McLEOD, ZINDA AND McLEOD:** Wire walkers/ball punchers (1915)
- Mc MAHON'S PERFORMING DOGS:** (1916)
- McNAMARA, NELLIE:** Singer (1921)
- McPHERSONS, THE:** (1927)
- MACK, BEN:** Singer (1919)
- MACK, BILLY:** [See Snooker and Poole]
- MACK, DAN:** (1914)
- MACK, EILEEN:** (1917-18)
- MACK, ELSIE:** (1922-23)
- * **MACK, JAKE:** Hebrew comic (1925) Formerly of Le Blanc and Mack. Billed as the Akim Foo comedian. Partnered Bert Le Blanc ca.1915, 1925. Engaged for Frank Gorman's Revue Co, 1925.
- MACK, JIM:** Comic/ball-punching (1914, 1920)
- MACK, VAL:** Chalkologist (1916)
- MAKES, THE TWO:** Patter/dancers (1918, 1920-21) Specialised in step-dance.
- MADAMOISELLE SANTA:** (1927)
- MAE, VIOLET:** Singer/dancer (1920)
- * **MAHOMET, CASS:** Patter/stories/anecdotes/singer (1920-22) Known for his original and Indian songs. Performed with walking stick and "expansive air."
- MAIDANTS, THE:** Specialty artists (1917)
- MAITALL, MARY:** (1917)
- MAJOR, ALEC:** Baritone. (1916)
- * **MALONEY, BILLY:** Singer/light comedian (1914-16) NSW/Qld tours: 1914. Described as the "Billy Percy of Vaudeville."
Billed on 1914 Qld tour as "the Man in the Red Velvet Coat."
- MALONEY, MASTER JACK:** (1917) Billed as the "boy wonder." One of the first winners of the NBT Amateur Trial nights.
- MALONEY AND ARTEEN:** (1920)
- * **MANCER, IRIS:** Juvenile singer/acrobatic dancer/skipping rope steps (1916-17, 1919) See also Black and White Duo, with Avol McKeller. Born 1903.
- MANDENESS, VALORIE:** (1918)
- * **MANDENO'S CANINES:** [Jack Mandeno] (1916-17, 1918, 1920) Aka Mandeno's Dogs.

- MANNERS, WILL:** Tenor (1914) Also partnered Betty Hyde, 1914.
- MANSFIELD, DOROTHY:** (1922)
- MANSFIELDS, THE:** (1922)
- * **MANTANA, FRED:** Tenor (1919-20) Also referred to as Frank.
- MANTON, ALICE:** (1917)
- * **MANTURIANS, THE:** Chinese Marvels (1918)
- MARGARET AND WILLIE:** Juvenile contortionists (1919)
- MARGUERITE:** Violin act (1917-18, 1920-22, 1925) Also worked carnival circuits.
- MARNO AND MURNALL:** Musical specialty (1914)
- MARSHALL, IVAN:** (1916, 1919, 1922)
- MARTIN, CORMAC:** (1924)
- MARTIN, EDDIE:** Dancer (1921-22, 1924)
- MARTIN, EVELYN:** Soprano (1917)
- * **MARTIN, JACK:** Texan cowboy/rope tricks/comic/escapologist/conjurer/ukulele (1921) Made first appearance on the Fullers circuit ca.1918 with Captain Brunswick troupe. Film actor with the Bison Co (USA). Began vaudeville career in 1915.
- MARTIN, LEO:** (1927)
- * **MARTIN, MAX:** Eccentric comic/dancer/singer (1914, 1916-19) NSW/Qld tours: 1914, 1917. Dance instructor. See, for example The Two Maxims.
- MARTIN, PHYLLIS:** (1914)
- MARTIN AND STEWART:** (1915)
- MARTIN THE GREAT:** (1917)
- MARTINI, EVELYN:** Singer (1917-18, 1920)
- MARTINIS, THE:** [child brother and sister] Singers/dancers (1918-20)
- MARTINS, THE:** [Victor and Maud] Comic jugglers (1912) NSW/Qld tour: 1912.
- * **MARTIN SISTERS, THE:** [Phyllis and Doris] Duettists/dancers (1908, 1913) NSW/Qld tours: 1908, 1913. On the 1908 tour; Phyllis also performed turns with Will Rollow and Frank King ("The Deserter").
- MARTON, JOCK:** Scottish comic (1915)
- MARVELOUS COCKATOOS, THE:** (1914)
- MARZON AND FLORENCE:** Balancing/tumbling (1914)
- MASKED SINGER, THE:** (1927)
- MASON, GERTIE:** (1916)
- MASSEY, JESSIE:** (1922)
- MASSEY, LEONARD:** (1915)
- MASON AND STEVENS:** [Fred Mason and Olive Stevens] (1918)
- MASON, FRED:** Tenor (1917-18) See also Mason and Stevens.
- MASON, LILLYAN:** (1917)
- MATANAS, THE:** Singers (1919)
- MATHISON, DOROTHY:** (1922)
- MATTERSON, NELLIE:** (1922)
- MATTHEWS AND MACK:** Comics (1915)
- MATTISON, DOROTHY:** Soprano (1922)
- MAURICE, FRANK:** (1920)
- * **MAX, CARLTON:** Ventriloquist (1915-17, 1919, 1921) Born Arthur Wallace Lawrence Guildford.
- MAXIMS, THE TWO:** Tiny tot dancers/singers (1917-19) Aka Two Dancing Maxims. Pupils of Max Martin.
- MAXWELL:** Comic cyclist (1915)
- MAXWELL, EILEEN:** (1922) See also Moran and Maxwell.
- MAXWELL, MARIE:** Singer (1917, 1920-22) Described as a "sob-voiced songstress."
- MAXWELL, MAY:** (1917)
- MAXWELL AND ROBERTS:** (1909)
- * **MAY, CLEMENT:** English character actor (1917) Specialised in Dickens' characters.
- MAY, EDIE:** (1918)
- MAY, VIOLET:** (1926-27)
- MAY, VERANA:** (1916)
- MAYNARD, JEAN:** Singer (1920, 1926)
- MAYNE, AVRIL:** Singer (1920-23)
- MAYNES, THE TWO:** (1920)
- MAYO, ALMA:** Dancer/singer (1917-19)
- MAYO, VERA:** (1925)
- * **MELODY FOUR, THE:** (1922-23) Aka The Melody Girls.
- MELVA TRIO, THE:** Singers/dancers (1917, 1921-22) Aka the Melva Girls.

- MELVILLE, DAISY:** (1918)
- * **MELVIN AND BARNESLEY:** [Charles Melvin and Eileen Barnesley] (1914) Husband and wife act.
 - * **MELVIN, CHARLES:** Singer (1914) Married to Eileen Barnesley.
 - * **MELVIN, FRANK:** Cornerman/acrobat/coon singer (1907, 1916) NSW/Qld tour: 1906.
 - * **MENZIES, TILLY:** Acrobat/female boxer (1916, 1920-21) Known as a juvenile acrobat, ca.1916. Distinguished herself as a female boxer in South Australia, 1923. See also Tilly and Doris.
- MERCER, BEATRICE:** (1914)
- MEREDITH AND ADNIL:** Acrobats/ strength (1916) Billed as "Iron-jawed Artists."
- MERLE, DON:** Magician (1927)
- * **MERLYN, CARL:** Magician. (1916-17, 1920) Aka Merlyn, The Merry Wizard. Merlyn's assistant was known as "Archibald, the Worst Wizard in the World."
- MERRIE MAISIE:** Comic/male impersonator (1920) Known for her impersonation of Stiffy and Mo singing "Woolloomooloo."
- MERRY AND BRIGHT CONCERT COMPANY, THE:** (1920)
- MERRY MAIDS, THE FOUR:** (1918)
- * **MERTON, IDA:** Singer/dancer (1915-21) NSW/Qld tour: 1917. With the Stiffy and Mo company ca.1922.
- MERTON AND RYDON:** (1918)
- MEYERS, MAJOR:** [Victor Meyers] Midget comic (1909) NSW/Qld tour: 1909.
- MIDGETS, THE THREE MUSICAL:** Singers (1917) Three juvenile males.
- MIGHTY ROMAS, THE:** (1917)
- MILLER, VICKY:** Pantomime actress (1911) Engaged for Harry Clay/Stanley McKay 1911 pantomime tour.
- MILLER, WILL:** (1927-28)
- MILLS, KITTY:** Actress (1914) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT, 1914.
- MINIATURE CHARLIE CHAPLIN, THE:** [See the Three Ruddles]
- MITCHELL, THELMA:** Contralto (1922-23)
- MONAHAN AND SHEEHAN:** Instrumentalists (1914, 1916)
- MONTEZ, OLGA:** (1915, 1918-20) See also Thompson and Montez.
- MONUMENT, FRED:** (1928)
- MONTAGUE, ADDIE:** (1916)
- MONTAGUE, MAUDE:** (1917)
- MONTAGUE AND PHILLIPS:** Singers/dancers (1917)
- MONTAGUE'S PIERROTS, DICK:** (1919) Company included: Dick Montague, George Whitehead, Delma Clare, Beatrice Wenban, Harry De Roebuck, Will Carlyon, Marie Hurst, Jessie Cowrie, Evan Walters, and Queenie Trenbath.
- MOORE, MADGE:** (1918)
- MOORE, PEG:** (1916)
- MOORE, REG:** (1916)
- * **MORAN, FRANK:** Comic/singer (1919-23, 1927-28) billed as "The Elongated Comic." Married to Alma May (English soprano).
- MORAN AND MAXWELL:** [Frank Moran and Eileen Maxwell] (1924)
- MORE, MAISY:** (1917)
- * **MORENI, CON:** Vocal comedian/monologist (1908, 1928) NSW/Qld tour: 1908. Also referred to as the "tired comedian."
 - * **MORENI, HARRY:** (1922-23)
- MORGAN, HARROLD T:** Solicitor/business partner. (ca.1908 -)
- MORGAN, MABEL:** Singer/dancer/principal boy (1926-27) NSW/Qld tour: 1927.
- * **MORLEY, ARTHUR:** Singer/comic/revue writer and producer (1915-19) Husband of Elsie Bates, whom he partnered in sketches. Mngr; Royal Musical Comedy Co, 1914-15. Mngr/Prod. NBT, 1916.
- MORLEY, LITTLE NEDDIE:** (1915)
- * **MORLEY AND BATES:** [Arthur Morley and Elsie Bates] Sketch artists/comics (1917) Husband and wife sketch team.
- MORRIS, ELSIE:** Singer/male impersonator (1916, 1919-21)
- MORRIS AND MUNRO:** (1914)
- * **MORRIS AND VANE:** Singers/vocal scenes (1926-27) Fullers 1926.
- MORRISON, BERT:** Comic/interlocutor (1917-18, 1920)
- MORRISON AND PALMER:** [Mercia Morrison and ?] Dancers (1917-18)
- * **MORRISON, MERCIA:** [stage name] American singer/dancer (1915, 1917-20) Sister of Violet Lorraine. Dance teacher in the Glebe/Leichhardt area in the 1920s (?). Arrived in Australia in 1914 with Le Roy, Talma and Bosco show.
- MORRISON, NELLIE:** Serio/soubrette (1909) NSW/Qld tour, 1909. Married to Dan Weldon
- MORRIS'S CONTINGENT OF QUADRUPEDS:** Animal act (1917) Five Russian mountain sheep, one lamb and two pigs.
- MORROW, WILLIE:** (1916) Appeared with Stanley McKay's Pantomime Co, 1916.
- MORTON:** [Fred Morton] Drunk instrumental act (1915, 1921)
- MORTON, F:** Actor. (1915) *Never Despair*, NBT 1915.
- MORTON AND RYDON:** (1918)
- MR E:** (1923)

- * **MURPHY, GEORGE:** American talking juggler (1913, 1916)
 - MURRAY, LYN:** Singer [male] (1907) NSW/Qld tour: 1907.
 - * **MURRAY, FLORA (FLO):** Singer (1901) NSW/Qld tour: 1901
 - MURRAY, VERA:** Motto balladist (1915-16, 1919 1921) See also the Revellers.
 - MUSICAL BLANCHARDS:** [see The Blanchards]
 - MUSICAL CLOWNS, THE FIVE:** (1920)
 - MUSICAL MAIDS, THE:** [Elsa Lewis and Pam] (1927)
 - MUSICAL SURPRISE PACKETS, THE FIVE:** (1920)
 - MUSICOS, THE:** (1915)
 - MYSTALOS:** (1927)
- NAGEL, MYRTLE:** Choreographer (1919) Director of dance for *Toyland*, 1919. See also The Tiny Tots.
- * **NAPIER, HECTOR:** Contortionist (1922) Billed as "the Human Spider."
 - NASH, BERT:** (1922)
 - * **NATIONAL DUO, THE:** Character singers (1914-15, 1917-20)
 - NAUGHTON, JIMMY:** Comic/dancer (1921)
 - NAUTICAL BALLET, THE:** (1916)
 - NEALLY, MAY:** Singer/dancer (1914)
 - * **NEILSON, TRUMAN:** Actor/comic (1915-17)
 - NELSON, CHARLIE:** (1920)
 - NELSON, ENID:** (1918-20)
 - * **NELSON, LEONARD:** Comic/singer/curtain novelties (1923) Sang original compositions/performed impersonations. Ex-Paul Stanhope Burlesque Entertainers, 1915.
 - NEVILLE, DOT:** (1918)
 - NEVILLE ROYAL DUO, THE:** Acrobatic dancers (1920-21)
 - * **NEWBURY, REGINALD:** Juvenile soprano (1917-18) Son of Phillip Newbury (vocal teacher and former concert producer/star – Newbury/Spada Pops Concerts ca.1890s/1900s). His mother is known to have been the producer of a musical comedy company, ca. 1917.
 - NEWELL, TOM:** Boomerang thrower (1922)
 - NEWMAN, OLGA:** (1921)
 - NEWMAN, PINK:** (1928)
 - * **NEWMANS, THE:** [Will and Linda] American trick cyclists (1920-21)
 - NEWTON GIRLS, THE:** (1920)
 - * **NIBLO AND DORIS:** [Dan Niblo and Millie Doris] (1925, 1927) Dan Niblo, blackface comic/patter; Doris, singer/diva/patter. Dan Niblo: also partnered Milton Owen, Fullers, 1924. Appeared on the Tivoli circuit, 1927.
 - NICOLL, MILDRED:** (1928)
 - NICHOL, WILL:** (1915)
 - NICHOLS, THE:** (1922)
 - NICHOLS, CECIL:** Singer/acrobat (1920)
 - NICHOLSON, JACK:** Manager at Gaiety Theatre, Sydney (1921)
 - NIGGER MINSTREL TROUPE, THE:** (1926)
 - NITA AND ESTELLE:** (1923)
 - NODIN, MAURICE:** Actor (1909) Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1919.
 - NOLLERS, THE TWO:** (1917)
 - NORA, ALICE:** (1923)
 - * **NORMAN, CHARLES:** Patterologist/singer/dancer/comic (1923-25) See also Arnold and Norman/Eade and Norman
 - NORMAN, HARRY:** Actor/stage manager (1908) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1909. Previously Bland Holt's S Mngr.
 - NORRIS, AMY:** (1917)
 - NORRIS, EVA:** (1916)
 - NORTON AND MAXWELL:** (1924)
 - NORTON, JIMMY:** Light comedy/dancer/musical comedy (1921)
 - NOVACS, THE:** Society skating specialties (1917)
 - NOYE AND FORD:** (1915)
 - NUTT, HAZEL:** (1921)
 - NUTTAL, MARY:** Character artist (1917)

- OBERDORFS, THE: [see The Musical Oberdorfs]
- O'BRIEN, QUEENIE:** Pianist/pit-band leader (1920) Worked with Frank Smith, violinist.
- * **O'CONNOR, D. B. COMPANY:** Opera/musical comedy entrepreneur (1928) Engaged by J. C. Williamson ca. 1909/10. Regularly toured Qld with his own company from around 1911 (on Birch & Carroll). Still touring there in the late 1920s with Paul Warton/D. B. O'Connor Co. Revues with Clay's include *A Girl for a Boy*. Took over the lease of the Coliseum Theatre, North Sydney in 1929 after Clay's ended its lease there.
- OGILVIE, HUGHIE:** (1918)
- OLGA, NELLIE:** (1917)
- OLGA AND EMMIE:** Jugglers/singers (1919) Performed "My Teddy Bear" with live koala.
- OLIVE AND CONNIE:** [Olive Stevens and ?] Duettists. (1917)
- ONCUS: [see George Wallace]
- ORMAND, MAUD:** Dancer (1920) [Maude Ormande ?]
- ORION:** (1927) Billed as 'the wonder man'
- OSBOURNE, DUD:** (1915, 1922) Described as veteran vaudeville performer in 1924.
- OSBOURNE, WILL:** M Dir. (1924-25) M Dir. at Princess Theatre ca.1924-25.
- O'SHEA, DORIS:** (1921)
- OSWELLS, THE:** (1916)
- OTHER TWO RASCALS, THE:** (1923)
- O'TOOLE, W:** Actor (1909) Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909
- * **PAGDEN, GEORGE:** Comic/negro comedy/revue producer (1914, 1917-19, 1924, 1927) NSW/Qld Tour: 1914. Operated the Merry Musical Burlesquers (Fullers 1915), which includes most of the Grafters Co. (including Carlton Chase, Leonard Nelson, Harry Ross and Les Bates). See also Pagden and Delavale / Pagden and Stanley / Waite and Weight.
- * **PAGDEN AND DELAVALLE:** [Erne Delavale and George Pagden] Comedians (1924)
- * **PAGDEN AND STANLEY:** [George Pagden and Kitty Stanley - husband and wife] (1914, 1917-18) See also George Pagden/Pagden and Delavale.
- PAGE AND ELLIS:** (1929)
- PALDEN, JACK:** (1914)
- PALMER, GERTIE:** (1917-18)
- PANSIES, THE FOUR:** Singers/dancers (1917)
- PARKER, WILLIAM:** (1917)
- PASCOE, BETH:** (1915)
- PASTOR, JONIE:** Violinist/acrobat/comic (1923) Billed as the "fidgety fiddling comedian."
- * **PATERSON, JACK "DINKS":** (1919-24) See also Dinks and Oncus, 1919-24 (with George Wallace). Dinks and Jimmy, 1922-23 / Dinks and Company, 1923-24. Partnered wife Trixie Ireland on stage for several decades beginning 1924.
- PATRICK, JOHN:** (1916)
- PATRICK, V.S.:** Actor (1909) Engaged for Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909
- PATTERSON, NOLA:** Child singer/sketch artist (1918)
- PATTON AND MEREDETH:** (1926)
- PAULASTO, VICTOR:** Musical acrobat (1917, 1919) Teamed up with Margaret Darragh, 1919 (they often dressed in "vivid green pierrot costumes.")
- PAULASTOS, THE:** [Ern and Fred Paulastro] Comics/patter (1917) Aka The Three Paulastos. 1918; touring with Leonard Doogood. The act included their own 5,000 ft film *Algie's Romance*. Tattler's Company, with Ted Stanley, 1930.
- PEARCE, BERT:** (1919)
- PEARSON, E.J:** Actor (1915) Appeared in *Never Despair*, NBT 1915.
- * **PEDRINI, PAUL:** (pre-1916) Performed with Toby "the World's Cleverest Baboon." Performing in the USA ca.1917.
- PEGGY:** (1920)
- * **PENNINGTON, OLGA:** Singer/balladist/dancer (1909-10, 1914-15, 1918-19) NSW/Qld tour: 1909. Known to perform little girl studies. Toured USA in 1916 and again in 1920-21 with Lillian Rockley as "the Australian Sapphires."
- PENNINGTON, VIC:** (1914)
- PERCIVAL, HAROLD:** (1918)
- PERKINS, ALF:** (1923)
- PERMAN, BELLA:** (1914)
- * **PERMAN, MAUDE:** Serio/comedienne (1907, 1909)
- PHARUS:** (1924) Billed as the "Egyptian Miracle Man."
- PHILIMERES, THE:** Acrobats/wire walkers (1917)

- PHILLIPS AND MACK:** Dancers (1921) Their turn described: "[they] give a tango dance. Bang! Te-dee-dee: rainbow colours, bandanna, cat-like tread; a passionate tossing of the head; a red flower, perhaps, and body movements echoing the soft dreamy and regular melody. Visualised it?"
- * **PHILLIPS, BESSIE:** (1904, 1914-22, 1924-27) Partnered sister Eileen, and did solo work as well.
 - PHILLIPS, JACK:** Endman/comic (1918, 1921)
 - * **PHILLIPS SISTERS, THE:** [Eileen and Bessie] (1914-21, 1924-27) NSW/Qld tours: 1914, 1916-17.
 - PHILLIP SISTERS, THE:** [Gertie and Hilda] (1904) NSW/Qld tour: 1904.
 - * **PHROZO:** Mysterious automation doll (n. yr.)
 - PICKFORD, ALICE:** (1918)
 - PICTORIAL LITTLES, THE:** [see The Littles]
 - PIE AND ALF:** (1925)
 - PINK PIEROTTS, THE:** (1916)
 - * **PINTO:** [Charles Pinto] Contortionist/artistic poseur/balancing (1920, 1924) Assisted by son, Jeff, ca.1920.
 - * **PITCHER, ERNEST:** Comic/instrumentalist (1922) Played saxophone, concertina and banjo.
 - PITCHER, SAM:** (1922)
 - POOLE, KITTY:** (1916-17, 1919-20)
 - POPE, P:** Actor. (1909) Engaged for Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909.
 - PORTLOCK BROTHERS, THE:** (1926)
 - PORTMAN, ANNETTE:** Singer (1917)
 - * **POSNER, MAISIE:** Singer/comic/impersonations (1917-19) Toured the Far East, 1920.
 - POWER, NELLIE:** (1909, 1915-16) Also partnered Bob Lloyd.
 - POWERS, THE TWO:** (1918-19) Male and female duo.
 - PRAIRIE DICK 'THE LONE STAR':** (1917)
 - PRESTON, MARJORIE:** Singer/dancer (1921-22)
 - PRESTON, TOM:** Melbourne dancer/skater (1917)
 - PRESTON AND ROY:** [Tom Preston and Sennet Roy] (1925)
 - PRINCESS THEATRE TRIO, THE:** [See The Bridge Theatre Trio]
 - PROVEANIES, THE:** Trick cyclists (1916)
 - PRY, PAUL:** Child singer (1919)
- QUAINT Q QUARTETTE, THE:** (1920)
- QUARTLEY, REG:** (1920s) "Reckless Reggie Quartley and his brilliant company of Singers and Dancers (billed in 1934 for George Lloyd Revue Co."
- QUEER QUARTETTE:** (1920)
- QUINE, ROX:** (1923)
- * **QUINNE, GRACE:** Singer (1915, 1918-21, 1926)
- RACHE, BERT:** Composer/music director/musician (1918)
- RACCOON TROUPE, THE:** Acrobats/tumbling (1910, 1921) Aka The Racoons. Also known to perform with a dog, Toby (ca.1910).
- RADISKIS, THE:** Wire-walkers and comedy jugglers (1917)
- RAIE, HAL:** (1921)
- RAINBOWS, THE FOUR:** Soubrettes/dancers (1929) Mo's Merrymakers Qld tour: 1929.
- RAINER, EDWARD:** (1914-15)
- RAINER, KITTY:** (1910, 1914)
- * **RALEIGHS, THE:** [Alf Raleigh; wire walker and stilts/woman; singer] (1914-16, 1918) Comedy wire act with singing laundry maid.
 - * **RALSTON, "JACK" JOHN:** Operatic baritone/patter (1909-11) NSW/Qld tour: 1911.
 - RAMBLERS, THE SIX:** (1927)
 - RANGER, FLORRIE:** (1915)
 - RANGER, STELLA:** (1915)
 - RAISEA:** Magician. (1920, 1922)
 - RATTERY, JAMES:** (1918)

- RAY, BERT:** (1917, 1921) Led his own Pantomime Co, ca.1924 (troupe incl. Arthur Elliott and Bertha Beaumont).
- RAY, DELLA AND DOREEN:** Jazzy eurhythmics act (1924)
- RAY, REG:** (1917)
- RAY, VIVIAN:** Soprano (1920)
- RAY AND GRAY:** (1916)
- RAY AND OLGA:** Songs and patter (1917, 1921)
- RAYE, ETHEL:** (1920-21)
- RAYE, HAL:** (1921)
- RAYMOND, ROBERT 'BOB':** Baritone (1918, 1927, 1929) Mo's Merrymakers Qld tour: 1929
- RAYMOND AND GREEN:** (1922)
- RAYNE, ALMA:** (1918)
- RAYNOR, KITTY:** (1914)
- * **RAYNOR, WILL:** English tenor/descriptive singer/illustrated singer/patter/comic (1910-11, 1916, 1920-21) NSW/Qld tour: 1911.
- RAYNOR AND BRENNAN:** (1925, 1926)
- READE, MAY:** Singer/Illustrated singer (1907, 1910) NSW/Qld tour, 1910.
- * **REDGRAVE, ROY:** Sketch writer/actor/comic/journalist (1917) Also appeared in *White Australia* (Randolph Bedford – Australian writer), June 1908. Appeared in *The Hayseeds* (Beaumont Smith film) 1917 as Dad Hayseed. Wrote *The Story of Waterloo*, 1917.
- REECE GIRLS, THE:** (1922)
- REEVES, HAROLD:** (1915)
- REEVES, PEARL:** (1918)
- * **REINE, VALMA:** Singer/patter/juggling (1917-18, 1920, 1922-23) Performed solo and with partner, Drew.
- REMA, RENIE:** (1918)
- * **REMBY, KITTY:** (1914-15, 1918) Also partnered Joe Lashwood, 1914.
- REMONA:** Mentalist. (1922)
- RENAUX GIRLS, THREE:** [aka The Three Renaux /The Four Renaux] Juvenile acrobats/dancers/singers/classical poseurs (1915-18, 1921)
- * **RENE, ROY:** Comic/impersonations (1913-14, 1929) NSW/Qld tours: 1913, 1929 (Mo's Merry Monarchs)
- RENNIE, BILLIE:** (1925)
- RENO BROTHERS JAZZ BAND, THE:** (1925)
- RENOS, THE:** (1919)
- RENTON, BARBARA:** Singer (1909) Wife of Harry Shine. Shine was also married to Violet Elliott at one stage.
- RENTON AND ELLEN:** (1927)
- REVELLERS, THE:** (1916) Vocalists: Colin Campbell, Harry Clay, William Everard, Florence Hartley, Vera Murray, Dot de Vere; comics: Billy Maloney, Arthur Tauchert, Ted Tutty.
- REYNOLDS, GEORGE:** Advance rep (1913-14) NSW/Qld tours: 1913, 1914.
- * **REXO:** juggler. (1914-16) Aka The Rexos.
- * **RHODES, PROF T.W:** Pianist/M Dir. (1901-1912) NSW/Qld tours, 1901, 1904-05, 1912. Arrived in Australia in 1885 under contract to Harry Rickards and remained in the country up until his death in 1918. Engaged as M Dir. for Harry Rickards (ca.1885-86, 1891-92); Cogill Bros (ca.1888); Dan Tracey (1891-92); Bondi Aquarium (1893); Coogee Aquarium (1893/98); M. L. Raphael (1899).
- RHODESBURY BROTHERS:** [Jack and ?] Patter comedians (1914-15) Aka The Two Rhodesbury's.
- RIALTO:** (1923) Billed as "the ace of clubs."
- RICHARDSON, MILLIE:** Staff member, NBT (ca.1917) Employed as a stenographer.
- RICKARDO, WALLY:** Acrobat (1914-16, 1918) See also Heller and Rickardo.
- RICKARTS, TOM:** (1911) NSW/Qld tour, 1911.
- RIDGEWAYS, THE THREE:** Comic acrobats (1914)
- RISDEN, JACK:** Singer (1917, 1920)
- ROBBINS, F:** Actor (1915) Appeared in *Never Despair*, NBT 1915.
- * **ROBERTS, ANDY:** Comic (1907, 1909-10) NSW/Qld tour: 1907. Appeared on the Tivoli circuit, ca.1909
- ROBERTS, WINNIE:** (1916)
- ROBEY, WILL:** [aka Will E. Grow] (1917) Independent vaudeville manager ca.1917-18 (circuit included Gaiety Theatre, Oxford St and Gladesville). Operated own signwriting business ca.1920.
- * **ROCHELLE, AMY:** Soprano/pantomime principal boy/child impersonations (1914-19) NSW/Qld tour: 1915. Married to Harry R. Kitching (*Australian Variety* editor). Principal boy with Fullers from 1919. Appeared with Jim Gerald Co, ca.1928 and Fullers "Novelettes" Revue Co, 1929.
- * **ROCKLEY, ALF:** Acrobatic comedian (1909) NSW/Qld tour, 1909. Also partnered brother Walter as The Rockley Brothers in the 1890s.

- * **ROCKLEY, LILLIAN (LILY):** Soubrette/singer/dancer (1914) NSW/Qld tour: 1914 (with Wal Rockley) Worked as solo act and also with father Wal Rockley. Toured USA with Olga Pennington as The Australian Sapphires 1919-21 performing in musical comedy.
ROCKLEY, PEGGY: (1920)
- * **ROCKLEY, WAL (WALTER):** Singer/comic (1914-23) NSW/Qld tour: 1914. Also partnered brother Alf as The Rockley Brothers ca.1890s, and later with daughter Lillian. Wal Rockley Revue Co, 1915 - with Lillian Rockley, Lulu Eugene, Bert Corrie and Dot Ireland
- * **ROCKLEYS, THE:** [Wal and Lilly] (1914)
ROLLING ROLLOS, THE: Illuminated skating act, using one wheel skates (1925)
- * **ROLLOW, WILL:** Melbourne comedian/specialty artist (1908, 1915-17, 1923) NSW/QLD tours: 1908, 1916. Appeared with Royal Musical Comedy Co, 1915.
- * **ROMAINE, JIM:** Comic/singer (1919-23) Billed as a "returned soldier comedian" in the Tom Dawson mold, and described as a scarecrow looking digger. Known to run close to the crude line of comedy.
ROMAS, THE MIGHTY: (1917)
ROONEY, ALMA: (1918)
ROONEY, ARTHUR: (1918)
ROONEY, JOHN: (1917)
- * **ROONEY, ROSE:** [See Rose Gray]
ROPER, MADAME: (1915)
ROSE, ETHEL: Singer. (1920-22)
ROSE, JOE: (1918)
ROSE, MYRTLE: (1917)
ROSE, NELLIE: (1917)
ROSEHILL AND ROSS: (1917)
- * **ROSIE RIFLE CO:** Sharp shooters (1914, 1916-18, 1925)
ROSLYNS, THE: (1916)
- * **ROSS, HARRY:** Comic/singer/producer (1926-28) Arrived in Australia with American Burlesque Company (1913-14), as a member of the Grafters Quartette. A member of Paul Stanhope's Merry Musical Burlesquers Co, ca.1915. Harry Ross Revue Company, 1926. See also Keating and Ross (with wife Clara Keating).
ROSS'S BONNIE BOYS: (1917)
ROWE, BONNIE: (1922)
- * **ROWE, DR RICHARD AND MOIRA:** Magician/mystic act (1914-15) Richard Rowe an ex Victorian jockey. Born 1880. Card manipulator, spiritualist. Started in vaudeville, 1895. Moira; mystic/spiritualist. Lessee of Coronation Theatre Bondi Junction, ca.1915. With Birch and Carroll in Qld, 1916. Toured China, Indonesia, Far East, 1916-17.
ROWE, THEA: [Thea Hosking] Singer/dancer/sketch actor (1920s)
ROY, SENNETT: (1925) [see also Preston and Roy]
ROYAL, CHRISSIE: Juvenile dance producer (1917)
ROYAL, DORIS: (1915)
- * **ROYAL GRAND OPERA SINGERS, THE:** (1922)
ROYAL MUSICAL COMEDY COMPANY: (1915) Included: Arthur Morley, Elsie Bates, Ted Stanley, Muriel Willis, Beth Pascoe, Will Rollow and The Harmonious Four.
ROY AND OLGA: (1917)
ROYALS, THE FOUR: Female troupe (1922)
- * **ROX, JOE:** Comic/revusical producer and manager (1905-06, 1914-22, 1926) NSW/Qld tour: (1905-06, 1914-15). Born Joseph Toon (cousin of Harry Rocks and married to Nina Gonzales). Possibly performing under the name Joe Toon pre-1905. Engaged by James Brennan for several years from the opening of the National Amphitheatre. Also regularly engaged by managers such as J. C. Bain, Percy Dix and Harry Barrington.
ROZELLE AND ROSS: (1917)
RUDDLE, BILL: (1917)
RUDDLE FAMILY, THE: [Bill, Olive and ?] (1914, 1916-19) Aka The Ruddles / The Three Ruddles / The Three Ruddles and the Miniature Charlie Chaplin, 1917.
RUSSELL, LORRAINE: (1918)
RUSSELL, TED: Tyroleon singer (yodelling) (1918-20)
RUSTY: (1927) Solo act and briefly on-stage partner of Clara Keating.
RYAN, PERCY: (1915)
RYAN, WINNIE: Singer (1915, 1917)

- * **SADLER, BILL:** Mngr (1918-28) - North Sydney Coliseum from 1918 / NBT ca.1928. Brother of Harry Sadler. Believed to be the man who came up with the name "Mo" for Stiffy and Mo.
- * **SADLER, HARRY:** Comic/singer/entrepreneur (1903-1913). NSW/Qld tour: 1912. Mngr/lessee of the Princess Theatre 1916-17 (with Jack Kearns); 1918-19 (with Andy Kerr). Brother of Bill Sadler.
- SATINETTOS, THE:** Novelty act (1918) Studies in silk and satin.
- SAUNDERS AND MARCELLE:** Singers (1921) Performed variety of styles from ragtime to opera.
- SCARFE, OLGA:** (1917)
- SCOTT, GREAT: See Great Scott
- * **SCOTT, HAL:** Singer/straightman (1919-22, 1925-27) "Conversationalist" in minstrel first part, 1922 / see also Scott and Graham.
- SCOTT, RAY:** (1925)
- SCOTT AND ALLNER:** [Ethel Scott and Amy Allner] (1917)
- * **SCOTT AND GRAHAM:** [Hal Scott and Connie Graham] (1922-23, 1925-27) Partnership formed in 1922 with Fullers engagement, specialising in character studies.
- SCOTT AND LESLIE:** (1920)
- SCULLY, GEORGE:** Comic (1919)
- SCULLY, TONY:** (1918)
- SCULLY, VINCENT:** Actor (1909) Engaged for Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909.
- SEARLE, NELLIE:** Motto song singer (1912) NSW/Qld tour: 1912.
- SELBURN:** Juggler/equilibrist (1921)
- SELINI:** Marimbaphone player (1924)
- SELWAY DUO, THE:** (1920)
- SENNETT ROY: [see Armitage and Sennett Roy / T. Preston and Sennett Roy]
- SENIOR ROGER:** Tenor (1921)
- SEYFFER TWINS, THE:** (1914-15)
- SEYMOUR, MARJORIE:** (1927)
- SHAND, ERNIE:** Acrobat (1918)
- * **SHAND, RON:** Patter/acrobatic dancer (1926) Appeared with Jim Gerald's Co, ca.1929. Original cast member of *The Sentimental Bloke*, 1961. Married to Letty Craydon.
- * **SHAND AND SHAND:** Comic acrobats (1917)
- SHAND, HELLER AND SHAND:** Acrobats. (1916) Two males and one female
- * **SHARRETT, GEORGE:** Singer/comedian/revue writer (1915-16, 1920) See also Sharrett and Lang. Wrote *Hello Newtown*, revusical (Jan. 1916, NBT). K-Nuts producer (Reg Thornton's troupe), ca.1920.
- * **SHARRETT AND LANG:** [George Sharrett and Annette Lang] Singers/comedians (1915-16, 1920)
- SHAW, EMMIE:** Singer/dancer (1917)
- SHAW, SYBIL:** (1917)
- SHAW, WINNIE:** (1917)
- SHEILDS, JACK:** Yorkshire comic (1914)
- SHEPPARD, WILL:** Musical act (1917)
- SHEPPARDS, THE MUSICAL:** (1917)
- * **SHERMAN, CHARLES L:** American comic pianist (1924-25) Also partnered George H. Ward, c1920.
- * **SHERWOOD, CURLEY:** Soubrette (1925)
- SHETTLE, PERCY:** (1915, 1918)
- SHETTLE, VERA:** (1915)
- SHIMA AND SADIE:** Ju jitsu experts (1915)
- * **SHIPP, LES:** Comic/singer (1910, 17-19, 1926-27) Son of Edwin Shipp and Minnie Love.
- * **SHIPP AND GAFFNEY:** [Les Shipp and Jim Gaffney] Singers/comics/dancers (1913, 1917-18) Billed as the "boys from Potts Point and the 'Loo."
- * **SHIPP AND HANLEY:** [Les Shipp and Nat Hanley] Comics/patter/singers/music (1915)
- * **SHIPP AND LITTLE:** [Les Shipp and Harry Little]
- * **SHIRLEYS, THE MUSICAL:** (1921)
- SHRIMPTON, ?:** (1924)
- * **SIDNEY, FRANK AND COMPANY:** Acrobat/novelty jumping act (1916, 1920) 3 performers. NB: spelling often alternates between Sydney and Sidney.
- SILBINES, THE:** Illusionists (1918)
- SILVESTER, GEORGE:** (1918)
- SILVINIS, THE:** Illusionists/mesmerists (1907, 1915-16, 1918)
- SIMPSON, JULES:** Actor (1914-15) Appeared in *Humanity*, NBT 1914-15.
- SINCLAIR, EVA:** (1916)
- SINCLAIR, OLIVE:** (1915) See also Vernon and Sinclair.

- SINCLAIR, ROSA:** (1920)
SINCLAIRS, THE: Equilibrists (1921, 1923) Aka Sinclair Bros
SKINNER, ALMA: (1924)
SKINNER, CHARLES: (1915)
- * **SLAVIN, ART:** Comic/revue writer and producer (1910, 1915-19, 1921, 1924-25) NSW/Qld tours: 1917, 1918. Married to Lily Thompson. See also Slavin and Thompson / Gadabout B-hoys.
 - * **SLAVIN AND THOMPSON:** (1915-19, 1921, 1924-25) NSW/Qld tours: 1917, 1918.
 - SMAILE, PEARL:** Specialty artist/acrobatic/singer/dancer (1909, 1913) NSW/Qld tour: 1913.
 - * **SMART SET DIGGERS:** Revue style entertainment/female impersonators (1925) The troupe included (at various times): Charles Holt, Tiki Carpenter, Ralph Sawyer, Harry Story (English pianist), Benny Verne (violin), Madam Levarto (piano), Fred Whitlow, Andy Patterson, Astor, Henri Mayson, Percy Lodge, Marshall Lawrence, George Helsby.
 - SMILES, FRED:** (1918-19)
 - SMILES, JACK:** (1918)
 - SMITH AND VERNE:** [see Ethel Smith/Smith Sisters/Joe Verne]
 - * **SMITH, ETHEL:** Singer/dancer (1901, 1905-06, 1912, 1915-16) See also the Smith Sisters. NSW/Qld tours: 1901 (solo) 1906, 1909, 1912 (solo). Solo act, also worked in partnership with sister May, and later with Joe Verne. Daughter of Wally Smith (who, along with Joe Rox, tutored Willie Smith).
 - SMITH, FRANK:** Pit-band violinist (1920) Performed with Queenie O'Brien.
 - SMITH, JACK:** Juvenile singer (1920) Aka Jacky Smith.
 - SMITH MAY:** (1905, 1920) [See also Smith Sister]
 - SMITH FAMILY, THE:** Singers/dancers (1914)
 - SMITH SISTERS, THE:** [Ethel and May] Singers/dancers (1905-06, 1909-10) NSW/Qld tours, 1906, 1909.
 - SMITH, WILLIE:** () Billed as "Little Willie" (his height was 3'4") NB: primary source reference, no date given.
 - SNOOKER AND POOL:** [Billy Mack and Jack West] Balancing billiardists (1916)
 - SOLOMON, DOLLY:** Soubrette. (1918-19, 1921)
 - SOLOMON, KITTY:** (1917)
 - * **SORLIE, GEORGE:** Singer/actor/acrobat/entrepreneur/baton swinger etc (1905, 1917-19)
 - SOUTHWELL, LOTTIE:** Serio/comic (1906) NSW/Qld tour: 1906.
 - SOUTHY, DICK:** (1916)
 - SPARKS, THE FOUR:** (1922-23)
 - SPARKS, JACK:** Double-voiced entertainer (1924)
 - SPARKES, GEORGE:** (1915)
 - SPAUL, VERA:** (1920) Solo dancer with the Five Georges.
 - SPEARS, LILA:** (1916)
 - SPEED, BILLY:** Trick cyclist (1915-16) See also Keldine and Speed, 1915. NB: Not blackface minstrel W. H. "Billy" Speed
 - * **SPENCER, HUNTLEY:** African American tenor (1916) Originally with the Era Comedy Four.
 - SPENCER AND SPENCER:** Mindreaders/mathematical calculations (1921)
 - SPRECKLES:** Burlesque cartoonist/ball bouncer (1914)
 - SPUD:** Comic (1914)
 - * **STAGPOOLE, ALEC:** Entertainer/Clay's scenic artist/property builder (1915-) See also daughters Elvie, Stella, and brother Ted "The Stagpooles."
 - * **STAGPOOLE, ELVIE:** Dancer/singer/ukulele player (1915-16, 1919-21, 1924-27) Married to Charles Delavale whom she partnered in sketches.
 - STAGPOOLE, STELLA:** (1916)
 - * **STAGPOOLES, THE FOUR:** [Ted, Stella, Elvie and Alec] (1915)
 - STAIG, F:** (1917)
 - STAIGS, THE:** Comic cyclists (1915) Act included at one stage "football on bicycles."
 - STAMPINI:** (1915) Billed as the "Steel skinned marvel."
 - * **STANHOPE, PAUL:** American revue artist/manager (1920) First toured Australia with the American Burlesque Co, 1913-14. Operated the Paul Stanhope Musical Burlesque Co, ca.1914-15. Stanhope and Delavale Revue Company, ca. 1921-22.
 - * **STANLEY, KITTY:** Soubrette/comic (1914, 1917-19) NSW/Qld tour: 1914. See also Pagden and Stanley.
 - STANLEY, MURIEL:** (1915)
 - STANLEY, SID:** (1922)
 - * **STANLEY, TED:** Comic/dancer/manager/revue producer (1911, 1915-23, 1928) NSW/Qld tour: 1911. Described as a diminutive comic (4' 5" tall). Appeared with the Royal Musical Comedy Co, 1915. Operated the Ted Stanley Revue Co, ca.1918. Partnered Elvie Stagpoole in contemporary dances, 1919. / Clay's manager, 1921. Appeared with Tattlers Co and Paulastros Boys Co, 1930.
 - STANLEY AND BURGESS:** (1916) Billed as "the long and short of vaudeville." [possibly Ted Stanley and Harry Burgess].
 - STANWAY, JESSIE:** (1918)

- * **STARRS, THE THREE:** Serios/dancers/ acrobatics (1914, 1916) NSW/Qld tour: 1914. Sisters Stella, Rita and Vera Gallagher (from Sydney). Act began in 1904. Known for their 'butterfly' specialty. Starr is the maiden name of the girls mother.
- STEELITE SAM:** (1920)
- STELLA:** (1920)
- STEPHENSON, GEORGE:** (1915)
- STERLING AND LOVE:** [Leo Sterling and Addie Love - husband and wife] English musical comedy sketch artists (1918, 1920). Addie Love; contralto / Leo Sterling; singer/musician.
- STERLING, DAVE:** (1915)
- STERN, SAM:** (1922)
- STEVENS, OLIVE:** (1916-18) See also Olive and Connie/Mason and Stevens.
- STEWART AND DELWYN:** [Cel. Delwyne and ?] (1922-23) See also Cel. Delwyne
- * **STEWART AND LORRAINE:** American comic music act/multi-instrumentalist act (1916-19) Aka The Stewart-Lorraine Trio, ca.1916.
- STEWART, DORIS:** Singer (1914, 1917-18, 1921)
- STEWART, JIMMY:** Conductor/M Dir. (1918) Replaced Percy Davis as Clay's senior music conductor.
- STEWART, MAUDIE:** Singer/character artist/Coster songs (1912, 1917, 1922) NSW/Qld tour: 1912.
- STIRLING AND ROB:** (1922)
- ST. LAWRENCE, BERTHA:** Sketch artist (1903) NSW/Qld tour: 1903.
- ST. LAWRENCE, TED:** Sketch artist/endman (1903) NSW/Qld tour: 1903.
- * **ST. LEON'S TRIO:** [Reg, Syl and Mervyn] Acrobats/jugglers (1924)
- STOFF, LIETENANT:** Military ventriloquist (1916)
- STRATTON, GUS:** Scottish comedian (1913) NSW/Qld tour: 1905.
- STRONGS, THE:** (1922)
- STROUDER, KATHLEEN:** (1920)
- STUART, DON:** Magician (1926)
- STURGEON, "SNOWY":** Bouncer (n. yr) An ex-boxer, he worked at the Coliseum Theatre.
- * **SULLIVAN, "LITTLE" CLAUDE:** Child singer (1905, 1907) NSW/Qld tour: 1905. Ex-Pollard's Lilliputian Co.
- SULLIVAN, RITA:** Singer (1921)
- * **SUMAS:** Musical items, recitations, dancing axes, musical spoons etc (1922) Billed as the "Canadian backwoodsman."
- SUTTON, TED:** (1917)
- SUTTON, VERA:** (1915)
- SUTTON AND JAMIESON:** (1915)
- SWEET, NINA:** (1921)
- SYDNEY, STELLA:** 1919
- SYDNEYS, THE:** (1920)
- * **SYLVANEY, ELSIE:** (1925) Appeared on the Fullers circuit, ca. 1924.
- SYLVANEY AND SCOTT:** (1927)
- * **SYLVESTER, DAISY:** Singer/dancer (1914, 1916-18, 1920-21) Appeared on the Tivoli circuit, 1905. Known for her toe-dance and Scottish dances.
- SYLVIA:** (1915)
- SYMONDS, NANCY:** Singer/balladist (1910)
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- * **TAFT, HARRY:** English comedian (1926) Billed as "The M.P. of Vaudeville and Laughter."
- TAGALA, MADGE:** (1917)
- * **TALMA, AL:** Magician (1925) Billed as the "talking trickster".
- TANDY, VERA:** (1914-15)
- TASSO:** (1922)
- * **TAUCHERT, ARTHUR:** Comic/filmactor (1910, 1914-16, 1919, 1922) Brother of Ida Tauchert (Mrs Jack Kearns / aka Ida Rosslyn). Also known as "The Sentimental Bloke" from 1919 onwards, after his most famous screen role. Starred in at least eight other films between 1919 and 1931. See also Delavale and Tauchert.
- TAYLOR, CHARLES:** Actor/manager/writer (1914-15) Appeared in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, NBT 1914; *Never Despair* and *Slaves of London*, NBT 1915. Charles H. Taylor's career goes back to the late 1860s/early 1870s. He appeared in countless Australian-written productions, including works by Garnet Walch and Marcus Clarke. Taylor and Carrington toured their own theatrical troupe around Australia and New Zealand during the 1890s and 1900s. Taylor also wrote a number of dramas and musical comedies himself. See also Ella Carrington.
- TAYLOR, ELOISE:** Soprano (1917)
- TAYLOR, IRIS:** (1916)

- TAYLOR, PERCY:** Gaiety Theatre manager (1920-22)
- TAYLOR, RONNIE:** Instrumentalist (1920)
- TAYLOR-COLEMAN PANTOMIME COMPANY:** [Harry Taylor and Alf Coleman] (1919-20) 16 members in the troupe. Prior to Clay's circuit undertook a Qld tour (with Jack Campbell as advance rep, approx Aug-Dec 1919).
- TEAGUE, JOE:** (1919)
- THEODORE:** Juggling illusionist (1925)
- * **THOMAS, DAN:** Revue producer/host/dame impersonator/journalist (1925)
 - * **THOMPSON, LILY:** (1915-1924) NSW/Qld tours: 1917, 1918. Married to Art Slavin, sister of Maisie Pollard. See also Slavin and Thompson. Ex-member of Pollards Lilliputian Co, and Pollards Juvenile Opera Co.
 - * **THOMPSON, LYLA:** Serio and character singer (1910, 1914-15, 1918-20) NSW/Qld tours: 1910, 1915. See also Thompson and Montez
- THOMPSON AND MONTEZ:** [Lyla Thompson and Olga Montez] Duettists (1918-20)
- THOMS, MISS:** Actress (1915) Engaged for *Never Despair*, NBT 1915.
- * **THORNTON, REG [THE KANGAROOSTA]:** Comic/revue producer (1918-19, 1921-22, 1925) Husband of Doris Thornton from the Tilly and Doris team.
- THORPE, MAY:** (1918)
- * **THURBER AND THURBER:** The American Eccentiques (1921)
 - * **TILLY AND DORIS:** [Tilly Menzies and Doris Thornton] Singers/dancers/acrobats/boxing/song scenas (1918, 1921, 1924-25) – debuted in 1907 as baby performers. Toured USA, ca.1925. Doris Thornton was the wife of Reg Thornton.
- TILLY AND ROSE:** Tiny tot dancers (1917)
- TILLY TRIO, THE:** Acrobats (1920)
- * **TILTON AND WEST:** [Stan Tilton and Ed West] Patter/comic singers (1916-17, 1922-23) Stan Tilton married to Dolly West (soubrette).
- TIME, MARK:** English comic (1917)
- TINDALL, DORIS:** Male impersonator/singer (1910, 1914-17, 1924-26)
- TOBY AND WELLS:** (1918)
- * **TOGOS, THE:** Japanese performers (1918) Aka The Royal Togos. Known for their Slide for Life act.
 - * **TOINTON, DORRIE:** [Dorothy] serio/dancer (1924) On Fullers circuit 1915-16 (incl. *Babes in the Wood*). Sister of Ruby Tointon.
- TOMBOYS, THE:** (1917)
- TOMS, THE TWO:** (1916)
- * **TOOHEY, WILL:** Acrobatic act with dog (1912) NSW/Qld tour: 1912. See also Toohey and Kitchie.
 - * **TOOHEY AND KITCHIE:** Tumblers, with dog (1914) See also Kitchie and Kliftie.
- TOON, JOE** [see Joe Rox]
- TORKILD:** (1915)
- TOSSING TESTROS, THE:** (1914)
- TRAVERS, J.L:** Actor (1915) Engaged for *Never Despair*, NBT 1915.
- TRENBATH, QUEENIE:** (1919) Appeared with Dick Montague's Peirrots, 1919.
- TRESCO, FRED:** (1922)
- * **TREVAIL, WINNIE:** Serio (1916-17, 1920)
- TRIXIE:** Novelty trick act (1918)
- TRIXIE AND BUTTONS:** Female child contortionists/acrobats (1918, 1920) Aka Trixie and the Button Boy. See also their parents Gibson and Doreen.
- TROMP, ADDIE:** (1915)
- TROMP, CHARLIE:** Comic/endman (1922)
- TRUMAN'S DOGS:** (1914)
- TRUMP, CHARLIE:** (1922)
- TURNBRIDGE AND ROSE:** (1915-16)
- * **TUTTY, KATE:** (1920) Aka Muriel Eskbank. See also Ted Tutty.
 - * **TUTTY, TED:** Blackface comic/bones/singer (1905-1925) NSW/Qld tours, 1905-07, 1909-10, 1913, 1915. See also Chenoweth and Tutty / The Tuttys. Also partnered wife Kate (Muriel Eskbank) / Harry Clay.
- TUTTYS, THE:** [Husband and wife act - Ted and Kate] (1920)
- TYE, ANNIE:** character artist (1915-17, 1920) See also Delwyne and Tye.

UNITY FOUR, THE: Acrobats and tableaux dancers (1916-17)

UPSIDE DOWN WRIGHT: (1917-18)

UREN, FRANK: Juggler (1916) Billed as "The Lightning Club Juggler."

UTTON, BETTY: (1917)

- VAL WITH HIS PAL BILLIE:** (1927)
- VALENTINE:** Ventriloquist. (1920)
- VALLI, JOE:** Comic/comedy company producer (1916, 1921) Joe Valli's Musical Comedy Co (see *Tickets Please*, 1916)
- VANE, LANCELOT:** Actor (1908-09) Dramatic Co Qld tour, 1908; Walter Bentley 1909 Qld tour. Brother of Jim Gerald and son of S.A. Fitzgerald. Appeared with Jim Gerald Co, ca.1928 (along with Amy Rochelle and Letty Craydon).
- VAUDE, LALLA:** (1918)
- * **VAUDE AND VERNE:** [Charlie Vaude and Will Verne] Patterologists (1915, 1923) Real names Charles Ridgeway and Will Barrington. Charlie Vaude was married to vaudeville performer Lillas Burt (first wife).
- VAUGHAN:** "Twisty novelty man" (1922)
- VERDON GIRLS, THE HARMONIOUS:** (1922)
- VERE, DOT DE:** (1916) See also the Revellers.
- VERE, MAY DE:** (1918)
- VERNADE:** Hand balancing/equilibrist (1914, 1916)
- * **VERNE, JOE:** Dancer/comic (1912, 1915-16, 1923) Partnered Bert Corrie as Corrie and Verne / brother of Priscilla Verne. See also Austral Trio
- VERNON, LOU:** (1915) See also Vernon and Sinclair.
- VERNON AND GIFFORD:** (1919)
- VERNON AND REID:** Balancing act (1916)
- VERNON AND SINCLAIR:** [Lou Vernon and Olive Sinclair] (1915)
- VESTO AND JULLYAN:** [Violet Jullyan and ?] Jugglers. (1917)
- VICTOR THE GREAT:** (1916-17, 1920)
- VIENNE, DOT DE:** Society entertainer (1916)
- VILLIERS, CHARLES:** Actor (1914-15) Engaged for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* NBT 1914; *Never Despair* and *Slaves of London*, NBT 1915.
- VINCENT, CHARLES:** Actor/sketch artist (1918)
- VINCENT, WALTER:** Actor (1914-15) Engaged for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, NBT 1914; *Slaves of London* NBT 1915.
- * **VIOLET AND VERNON:** Balancing/dancing (1918) See also Lou Vernon / Vernon and Gifford / Vernon and Reid / Vernon and Sinclair.
- VIVIAN AND DUNN:** (1926) Worked in USA 1924-25. Vivian-Dunn Troupe (ca.1927) - an ensemble of young dancers under the direction of Vivian and Dunn.
- VIVIANS, THE:** [Madge and Marie] (1910, 1917)
- * **VOCKLER, ERN:** Dancer/singer (1914-16, 1920) Known as "the Australian Charlie Chaplin." See also The Delavale Brothers
- * **VOCKLER, LILY:** Motto balladist/actress/serio/soubrette/pantomime principal boy (1909, 1912, 1915-16, 1919-20, 1923, 1926, 1928) Wife of Ern Delavale, whom she partnered, and sister of Art Martell (Australian boxer) and Ern Vockler.
- VOCKLER, ?:** (1926)
- VORNS, THE:** Motor sensation (1924) Their act included an aeroplane (?)
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- WAINE, PINKY:** (1919-22)
- WAH LEAH:** Chinese magician (1921)
- WAITE, CHARLES:** Comic/singer/straight man (1907, 1917) See also Waite and Weight.
- WAITE AND WEIGHT:** [Charles Waite and George Pagden] Comics (1917)
- WAKEFORD, CISSY:** (1905) NSW/Qld tour: 1905.
- WALDON, VERA:** (1918)
- * **WALDRONS, THE:** [Joe and Ettie Waldron] English comics/patterologists (1915) Fullers, 1914. Joe Waldron took over lease of Coronation Theatre Bondi Junction, Feb 1915. Parents of Billy Watson.
- WALFORD, CLARE:** M Dir./pianist (1913,1920) NSW/Qld tour: 1913. M Dir: Paris Gardens, Manly 1920.
- WALKER AND CAMPBELL:** Jugglers/racquet spinners and silver wire (1917)
- WALKER, DRIVER:** (1919)
- WALKER, ETHEL:** (1916)
- WALKER, FLORENCE:** (1916-17)
- WALKER, GEORGE:** (1920)
- * **WALKER, WHIMSICAL:** Trick cyclist (1916, 1918-19) Fullers 1918, France, 1919.
- WALLACE:** juggler. (1920)
- WALLACE, BABE:** (ca.1924) Sister of George Wallace, who Charles Norman recalls "worked around the Clay circuit... she and I did songs and dances and patter together."

- * **WALLACE, GEORGE:** Comic/revue producer/film actor (1919-1924) Partnered Dinks Paterson as Dinks and Oncus, 1919-21.
George Wallace Revue Co.
- * **WALLACE, GEORGE JNR:** (1927) As a child he was known as Wee Georgie Wallace. Son of George Wallace.
- WALLACE, LADE:** (1918)
- WALLACE, OLIVE:** (1924)
- WALLACE, RUBY:** (1910, 1915, 1917)
- WALLACE, SAM:** (1918) Also one of the Wallace and Clark team.
- WALLACE, WILL "PIPECLAY":** (1904, 1915) NSW/Qld tour: 1904. Aka The 'Black Diamond'.
- WALLACES, THE TWO:** [George Wallace and wife] (1919)
- WALSH TRIO, THE:** (1920)
- WALSH, ALEN:** Baritone (1926) From Adelaide.
- WALTERS, EVAN:** (1919) Engaged for Dick Montague's Pierrots, 1919.
- WALTERS, LULU:** (1918)
- WALTON, ALICE:** Singer. (1917-18)
- WALTON, GEORGE:** Comic (1917-18, 1921)
- WALTON, MAY:** (1918)
- WALTON, VERA:** Contralto/balladist (1915-18)
- WALTON, WATTY:** Patter/dancing/acrobatics (1920, 1924)
- WALSH AND WALSH:** (1921)
- * **WARD, GEORGE "H":** Revue writer/impersonator/revue company (1924, 1928) Aka Little Hermie Ward. American entertainer who partnered Charles L. Sherman in the Sherman-Ward Revue Company, ca.1920. Revue company in 1929 - troupe included Bert Le Blanc, Charles Sherman, Curley Sherwood, Winnie Edgerton.
- * **WARD, LALLA:** Singer (1917-19)
- WARNE, BERT:** (1915, 1917, 1919)
- WARNE, DAVE:** Character artist (1917-18) Secretary of the Green Room Club, 1914.
- WARREN, MOLLY:** (1921)
- WARREN AND ST LEON:** Jumping and knockabout act (1914)
- WATLING, TINE BABY:** (1918)
- WATSON AND WALDRON:** (1918)
- * **WATSON, BILLY:** Black-face/comic/revue writer (1915, 1917-18) Partnered Vera Waldron ca.1918 (wife?). Son of Joe and Ettie Waldron.
- WATSON, C.E:** Actor (1915) Engaged for *Never Despair*, NBT 1915.
- WATSON, SCOTT:** "The wonder drunk" (1924)
- WATTS, ARTHUR:** Actor (1915) Engaged for *Slaves of London*, NBT 1915.
- WATTS, JACK:** (1920)
- WATTS AND MAURICE:** (1920)
- WEATHERLEY, LILLIAN:** (1920)
- WEATHERLY, ZIRDA:** (1920)
- WEATHERLY TRIO, THE:** [sisters] (1920, 1927) NSW/Qld tour: 1927. Billed as "the boneless wonders."
- WEBB, CLAUDE E:** Advance Rep. (1909) Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909.
- WEBB, MASTER:** Singer (1917)
- WEBB, PEARL:** (1919)
- * **WEBBER, FRED:** Comic/singer/cornerman/pianist/ragtime singer (1918) Also played cornet. Married to Dorothy Ryder (sister of Evelyn Dudley) NZ 1924. Fullers 1924.
- * **WEE DARRELL:** Child acrobat/contortionist (1916-17) Also worked with Little Verlie / student of Lillian Ross from age of three.
- WEEKES, RALPH:** Drummer/songwriter/arranger (1914-18) Wrote "How I Beat Jack Johnson" for George Sorlie, 1917.
- WEIR, JOHNSTONE:** actor/recitations with slides (1909, 1917) Walter Bentley Qld tour: 1909. Australian Actors Association President.
- * **WELDON, DAN:** Baritone (1913) NSW/Qld tour: 1913. Married to Nellie Morrison (soubrette/serio).
- WELLS, BILLY:** (1916)
- WELLS, NITA:** (1918)
- WELLS AND CLIFTO:** (1917)
- WELLS AND REVO:** (1919)
- * **WELLS AND DELLS:** Roman rings/comedy act (1919-22)
- WENBAN, BEATRICE:** (1919) Appeared with Dick Montague's Pierrots, 1919.
- WEST, EDDIE:** (1916)
- WEST, GRAFT:** Comedian/dancer (1909)
- WEST, HENRY:** Actor (1914-15) Engaged for *Humanity*, NBT 1914/15.
- WEST, JACK:** Hand-balancing (1916) See also Snooker and Pool, with Billy Mack.

- WESTON, HAZEL:** Singer (1915)
- WESTONS, THE THREE:** (1922)
- WESTON:** Acrobat (1920) Known for hand walking.
- WESTON, BERT:** Equilibrist (1924)
- * **WESTON AND HILL:** Patterologists (1915)
- WESTONS, THE:** (1910) Aka The Two Westons.
- WEST SISTERS, THE:** (1918)
- WHEELER, GEORGE:** (1916)
- WHELAN, ALICE:** (1920)
- WHELAN, MARY:** Soubrette (1920)
- WHISTER, FRED:** Magician (1922)
- WHITCOMBE:** Aerialist and fancy skater (1925)
- WHITE, FRED:** (1922)
- WHITE, JAMES H. "WHITIE":** Booking agency manager/entrepreneur (1916-)
- WHITE, WILL:** Coon singer/eccentric dancer (1908) NSW/Qld tour: 1908.
- * **WHITEHEAD, GEORGE:** American baritone (1917-19) Appeared with Dick Montague's Pierrots, 1919.
- WHITE ROSE DUO, THE:** (1922)
- * **WHYTE, WALTER:** Actor/singer (1908) Dramatic Co Qld tour: 1908. Previously with 1905-06 Gilbert and Sullivan Co, along with John Ralston and Dolly Castles.
- WHIZZ BANGS, THE:** (1927) 25 artists on stage for 40 minute turn.
- * **WIDGERY, BOBBY:** Comic (1902) NSW/Qld tour, 1902 (2nd leg). Billed as "the pocket comedian" (3'4" tall)
- WIGGINS, BERT:** (1922)
- WILLANDRAS, THE:** Comic cyclists (1915)
- WILLIAMS, BESSIE:** (1916)
- WILLIAMS, BILLY:** (1916)
- WILLIAMS, ERNIE:** Singer (1916) Ex-boxing industry.
- WILLIAMS, HARRY:** Singer/dancer (1911) NSW/Qld tour: 1911.
- WILLIAMS, JACK F:** Comic/dancer (1902, 1909) NSW/Qld tour: 1902.
- WILLIAMS, REG:** (1909)
- WILLIAMSON, GEORGE:** (1920)
- WILLIS, HARRY:** Ventriloquist/musician (1909-10) NSW/Qld tour: 1910.
- WILLIS, MURIEL:** Singer/dancer (1915) Appeared with the Royal Musical Comedy Co, 1915.
- * **WILSON, ALFRED 'REDHEAD':** Comic/acrobat/journalist (1916-17) NSW/Qld tour: 1917. Also partnered Tom Rees as "The Two Don Juans" ca.1917. Previously in the comedy acrobatic team, Morris and Wilson (ca.1910).
- WILSON, BERT:** Comic/end man/society entertainer (1917-18, 1922)
- WILSON, DIANA:** (1920)
- WILSON, JACK:** (1920)
- WILSON, PEGGY:** (1915, 1920)
- WILSON, RUBE:** Male juvenile singer (1920)
- WILSON, SAM:** Singer/dancer/end man/comedian (1901) NSW/Qld tour: 1901.
- * **WINIFRED AND LUMLEY:** [Winifred ? and Warwick Lumley] Dancers/comics/patter (1921)
- WINNIE AND LETTIE:** (1920)
- WINTERS DOGS, CAPTAIN:** (1920, 1922)
- WISE, ALF:** Revue comedian (1923-24)
- WITT AND SANG:** (1920)
- WOLLET, MRS:** Actress (1915) Engaged for *Never Despair*, NBT 1915.
- * **WONG TOY SUN:** Australian Chinese act, with lithographs (1917) Act included Yuk Lan ("the Mystic Maid").
- WOODS, THELMA:** Contralto/IS (1908, 1910, 1915) NSW/Qld tour: 1908.
- WURRIE, WY:** (1924)
- * **WYNAND, WILL:** Comic/descriptive singer/character impersonator/actor (1908-10) NSW/Qld tours: 1908 Dramatic Co, 1909-11
- WYNNE, ARTHUR:** Actor (1915) Engaged for *Slaves of London*, NBT 1915.
- * **YASUDA, TARA:** Japanese juggler. (1921)
- YONAS:** Musician (1927) "Mello piano-accorion."

ZAILA: (1920)

- * **ZENO AND DON:** Comic and inebricated dog (1922) Don, a fox-terrier, is billed as "the dog that assisted Mary Pickford in *Daddy Long Legs*."
- * **ZIGOMARS, THE:** [Matador A. and Madge Zigomar] Serbian acrobats/jugglers/balancing/ball punching (1916-17, 1919-20)
Madge also played saxophone.
- ZILLAH, LA PETITE:** (1920)
- ZOL ANGUS:** [Jenner and Angus] (1918)
- * **ZOLI, CHARLES:** Italian comedian/impersonator (1910, 1915) Long-time on-stage partner of Victor Prince. Son-in-law to Wal Cottier and Amy Blackie. Died in 1951 (approx Mar/Apr).

APPENDIX B

HARRY CLAY'S VAUDEVILLE ENTERPRISES

A SURVEY OF ARTISTS AND COMPANIES KNOWN TO HAVE USED THE AGENCY'S SERVICES

The following is the result of information collected during the course of this thesis, and which may be of use to research in the future. It is by no means comprehensive, and has been compiled mostly through advertisements and reports published in J.H. White's Australian Variety and Show World columns. It can be assumed, then, that many other artists and companies using the service, in addition to private functions and social events, were not publicised by White, nor mentioned as part of the on-going reporting by various magazines during the period.

The exact nature and length of Harry Clay's involvement with the agency after its name change in 1921 is also unknown, although there is no evidence at this stage to indicate that he had divested himself of an interest in the company at this time.

This survey does present an idea, however, as to the extent of Harry Clay's influence and involvement in vaudeville in Australia, and not just his own company. Indeed, as this thesis has already noted, providing employment for the industry was very much a part of Clay's role, and hence the importance of Poverty Point (located outside his office in the city). Further to this, the ability of performers to obtain employment with Clay's was considered a stepping stone towards furthering their career with the larger organisations, and his agency was just one avenue for the raising an act's profile, if not with his own vaudeville circuit at first, then at least as a way of gaining recognition through work with other companies and venues. During this period, too, the adaptation of vaudeville to the picture industry was gaining momentum - with films in the city and country areas regularly combining one or two acts during the course of an evening's entertainment. Clay's role in providing acts for these programmes has not yet been linked, but it is quite possible that the agency acted for the picture theatres as well as other vaudeville venues and companies.

Many of the artists included in this survey have already been identified as having worked on Harry Clay's circuits. They have been included again, however, as a means of gaining some idea as to how the agency operated. Clay was known to have regularly loaned out artists to other managers and entrepreneurs so the agency, in essence, was simply an extension of his already established operations. Alternatively, with quite a number of the acts mentioned having not been found within the reviews and reports concerning Clay's vaudeville company, it can be presumed that the agency was not considered a walk-in start to his own circuit.

As with the previous Appendix, the dates included within this survey should not be considered definitive, as the availability of primary source records are all too often incomplete. Whether artists or companies maintained relationships prior to or after the years given is therefore undetermined at this stage.

- 1916-20:** Harry Clay's Vaudeville Enterprises (J.H. White, manager from August 1916). Mostly referred to in Australian Variety: as White's Agency.
- 1921 - :** Australasian Theatrical Bureau (J.H. White still Manager/co-proprietor)

ACTING FOR

Garden fetes, carnivals, smoke nights, social events, private parties, in addition to:

- **Abraham's, Hyman:** Oxford Theatre, Paddington (1917)
- **Alhambra Theatre:** (no dates)
- **Baker's Stadium:** Rushcutters Bay (1916-18)
- **Beck, Ike:** Newcastle/Hunter circuit (1918, 1920)
- **Bishop and Dampier's Comedy Costume Company:** South African tour, 1917 [Humphrey Bishop and Claude Dampier]
- **Bray's Boomerang Theatre,** Coogee, (1918)
- **Centenary Carnival,** Goulban (1920)
- **Clare's Picture Theatre,** Drummoyne (1917)
- **Craydon, James:** Mascot (1916)
- **Dennis, Percy:** Western Australia (1919)
- **Harmston's Circus:** (1917) sole Australian representative.
- **Henry, Dr Lewis:** Hobart National Theatre; (1918)
- **Hippodrome,** Sydney (1917-18)
- **Hollyford's Dramatic Company:** (1918)
- **Howard, Bert:** Coronation Picture Palace, Leichhardt (1917)
- **James, Les:** South Coast Circuit (1918) includes: Wollongong
- **King's Theatre,** Newcastle (1917)
- **Knight, Ernest:** Britannia Theatre, Manly (1916) books his entire show through Clay's from Oct. 1916.
- **Ladow, Jacky "Hillie":** Mascot (1916) circuit includes Mascot
- **Leathard, A.H:** Burwood (1916)
- **Lytton, Phillip - Vaudeville Co:** (1918) - under canvas in 1918, circuit includes North Coast of NSW.
- **Ogden's Crown Star Theatre,** Surry Hills (1918-19)
- **Reis, Frank:** (1919)
- **Robey, Will:** Clare's Picture Palace, Drummoyne (1917-18)
- **Sadler, Harry:** National Theatre, Hobart (1917-18), Gaiety Theatre (1918-19)
- **Shaftesbury Theatre,** Perth WA [A.E. Hosking, Managing Dir.] (1920)
- **Sydney, Frank:** circuit includes Temperance Hall, Hobart (1920)
- **Smith, "Tup":** Newcastle District Circuit (1916)
- **Tivoli Theatre (Syd):** (1916)
- **Thornton, "Ned":** Roseberry Theatre, Mascot (1917)
- **Webb ?:** Newcastle (1919)

NOTE:

- * All theatres are located in Sydney unless otherwise stated.
- * The agency also advertised for artists to tour the East, particularly circus acts.
- * Competing agencies known to have been operating during the same period as Clay's include:
 - Star Vaudeville Agency: run by Joe Lashwood and a Mr Rowley ca.1916.
 - Bert Howard Enterprises
 - Ike Beck Enterprises
 - Australian Variety (ca.1915-16)

ABBOTT, PERCY: (1916)
ALBERTSON, SID: (1918)
ALDOUS, ALMA: (1917-18)
ALVA TRIO: (1917)
AMBROSE, MOLLY: (1918)
ANDERSON, RAY: (1916)
ARCHER, JOE: (1917)
ASHMAN, HILDA: (1916)
ASTON, STELLA: (1917)
AUSTRALS, THE THREE: (1916)

BALANCIENERS, THE: (1918)
BANVARDS, THE: (1919)
BARON: (1916)
BARNSELY, EILEEN: (1920)
BARRINGTON, JACK: baritone/whistler. (1916)
BATES AND WADE: (1916)
BELLORA: (1915)
BELMONT, THE AERIAL: (1916)
BERNARDS, THE THREE: (1916)
BILLY AND DORIS: (1918)
BLACK AND WHITE DUO, THE: (1917-18)
BORNEO: [the 'Monkey Man'] (1917)
BOSTON, NORMAN: (1918)
BRASH, HAL: (1916)
BREWER, MEL: (1917)
BROWN, DOT: (1918)
BROWN, ELSIE: (1919)

CALDWELL, JAMES: (1917)
CAMERON, CLYDE: (1918)
CANE, FRANK: (1920)
CARLTON AND SUTTON: (1919)
CAURLET, MDLLE: (1918)
CELERE: (1917-18)
CELERE AND DON STEWART: (1917)
CESARINO, LUCIEN: (1917-18)
CESARINOS, THE TWO: (1918)
CHAMBERLAIN, MARJORIE: contralto. (1918)
CHAMPNEY, WALTER: (1917)
CHARLBERT BROTHERS AND HARRY: (1919)
CHARLES, JOE AND EMILE DANI: (1917)
CLARINOS, THE: (1916)
CLAY'S COMPANY: (1917)
CLAY'S "DOCTOR BAKER'S ASYLUM" COMPANY:
 (1918)
CLEEMO: pot pourri artist. (1916) possibly Fed Klimo
CLIFFORD SISTERS, THE: (1917)
CLIFF GIRLS, THE: (1917)
CLOTHILDA AND CO: (1916)
COLEMAN SISTERS: (1916)
COSTELLO AND COX: (1918)
CRANE, SIDNEY: (1917)
CRAWFORD AND CAMPBELL: (1918)
CRAWFORD, ERNEST: (1917)
**CRAYDONS, JAMES - COMEDY SKETCH
 COMPANY:** (1917)
CREBER, MURIEL: (1917)
CROTTY, GEORGE: (1917)

DEAN, GEORGE: (1916-17)
DE BAKERS MODELS: (1919)
DE ALMA, GEORGE: (1918)
DE LACEYS, THE: Irish comedy sketch artists (1917)
DE LYLE, JOHN: (1918)
DENTON, KATHLEEN: (1917)
DESPERADO AND LA ROSE: (1918)
DE VINE'S FIVE GADABOUT GIRLS, DOT: (1918)
DEVONS, THE THREE: (1916)
DICKENSON, A.J: (1918)
DOOLEY GIRLS, THE: (1918)
DRISCOLLS, THE: (1917)
DUGGAN, LOUIE: (1916,1918)
DUTTON, DOROTHY: (1916-17)

EDENBURY, CHARLES: (1917)
EDOUIN, HARRY: comic/dancer. (1918)
EDWARDS, ALF: (1918)
ELMAR TRIO: equilibrists. (1916)
ERMAKOV, ZACHAREE: (1918)
ERNESTOS, THE: (1917-18)
ESKBANK, MURIEL: (1916)
ESDALE, RUBY: (1917)
EUGENE, LULU: (1917-18)
EURASIAN: oriental magic revue (1918)
EWART DRAMATIC SKETCH COMPANY, THE:
 (1918)

FAIRBANKS, WILL: (1918)
FANNING, MAUD AND FAMILY: ragtime revels. (1916)
FARROW, HARRY AND LOUIE: (1917)
FAYE, PHYLLIS: (1917)
FIVE GADABOUT GIRLS: (1917)
FLOOD, CECILIA: (1918)
FOLEY'S BUCKING MULE: (1917)
FORD AND DAVIS: (1919) [Courtney Ford and Ivy
 Davis]
FORD AND PERRIN: (1917)
FOSTER, BOB: (1916)
FREDONY AND CO: Protean novelty. (1918)
"FUN ON THE OCEAN" COMPANY: [Clay's company]
 (1917) includes: Maisie Posner, Pagden and Stanley,
 Amy Rochelle, Gilberts, Max Martin, Ted Tutty,
 Corona.

GALE AND SADIE: (1916)
GILBERTS, THE TWO: (1917)
GILFAIN TRIO: (1918-19)
**GODFREY'S MONKEYS AND COCKATOOS,
 PROFESSOR:** (1916)
GOLDEN DUO, THE: (1919)
GOLLMICK, ERNEST: (1917)
GORDON AND LATCHEN: (1919)
GOSWARD: (1917-18)
GOURLEY, KATIE: (1920)
GREEN, MURIEL: (1918)
GREENWOOD, REG: (1919)

HAL: juggler/wittiscisms. (1916)
HANLEY, NAT: (1916-17)
HERNE, HAL: (1920)
HAL: (1917)
HARDIE, EMMIE - AND HER TEDDY BEAR:
 (1917-18)
HARDIE SISTERS, THE: (1918)
HARLANS, THE GYMNASTIC: (1917) aka The
 Harlans/The Balancing Harlans
HART, HARRY: (1917)
HAYWARD, GUS: (1919)
HEDLEY AND BARTLETT: comedy instrumentalists.
 (1916)
HEDLEY, TOM: (1916)
HENNESY AND MARTELL: (1916)
HENRY, MADAME: (1916)
HOLLAND, FRITZ: [Fred Creel] (1917)
HOWARD, JESSIE AND LITTLE STELLA: [Scottish
 entertainers] (1916-17) - aka Jessie and Stella

INCOGNITA QUARTETTE: (1916)

JACK, UNO: (1917)
JONES, HARRY: (1919)

KEATS, HORACE: pianist. (1918)
KEE AND LEE: (1916-17)
KELVIN, LEO: (1916)
KENNER, ALICE: (1918)
KING AND GRAHAM: (1917)
KINGS, THE FOUR: (1918)
KITCHIE AND KLIFTIE: 1917-18)
KLENTOS, THE: (1917)

LA MERTS, THE TWO: (1916)
LASHWOOD, JOE: (1917)
LAVELLS, THE TWO: club jugglers. (1916)
LAZERN THE MYSTIC: (1916-17)
LAZERN AND "FREEZO": (1918)
LEE CHEE LOON TROUPE: (1920)
LEO AND LIONEL: (1915)
LEONARD, TOM: (1916-17)
LEONARD'S POODLES: (1918)
LES FRANCOIS: (1917)
LEVARTO, PHIL: (1917-18)
LEWIS, GLEN: (1918)
LITTLE VERLIE: (1916-17)
LORRAINE, FLORENCE: (1918)
LORRAINES POSING MODELS: (1917)
LYNDONS, THE TWO: (1916)

MACK, EILEEN: (1918)
MANDENO'S DOGS: (1916,1918)
MARGURITA: (1917)
MARSHALL AND VIVIAN: (1916)
MARSHALL, IVAN: (1916)
MARTIN, LILLIAN: (1916)

MARTIN, MAX: (1917)
MASON, FRED: (1917-18)
MAYO, ALMA: (1917)
MAX, CARLTON: ventriloquist. (1917)
MAXIMS, THE DANCING: (1918)
MERLYN, CARL: (1917)
MERTON, IDA: (1916-17)
MILTON, SID: (1917)
MONAHAN AND SHEENHAN: (1917)
MORRISON AND PALMER: (1918)
MUSICOS, THE: (1915)
MURRAY AND BROWN: [Eileen Murray and Dot
 Brown] (1917)

NATIONAL DUO, THE: (1916-18)
NEILSON, TRUMAN: (1917-18)
NELLIS, ALICE: (1917)
NEWBURY, REGINALD: (1918)
NOVAKS, THE: (1917)

PAGDEN AND STANLEY: (1917)
PHILLIP SISTERS, THE: (1917-18)
PHILLIPS AND MONTAGUE: (1917)
PHILMERS, THE: (1917)
PONCAIRE, MONS: (1917)
POOLE, KITTY: (1916-17)
POSNER, MAISIE: (1917)
PRESTON, TOM: (1917)

QUINLAN, JACK: (1917)

RALEIGHS, THE: (1918)
RAY AND OLGA: (1916)
REDGRAVE, ROY AND SKETCH COMPANY: (1917)
RENAUX, THE THREE: (1917)
RICKARDO AND BARNEY: (1916)
RICE, LILLIAN: (1916)
ROCHELLE, AMY: (1917)
ROCKLEY, WAL: (1917-18)
ROMAS, THE MIGHTY: (1917)
ROSIE RIFLE CO: (1917-18)
ROX, JOE: (1917)
ROYAL QUARTETTE, THE: (1916)
ROYAL TOGOS, THE: (1918)
RUDDLES, THE THREE: (1917)
RYAN, WINNIE: (1916)

SALBERT, THE GREAT: (1919)
SAXONS, THE THREE: (1916)
SCOTT, HAL: (1920)
SELDOMS, THE: (1916)
SHALBERT'S ROYAL PUNCH AND JUDY SHOW,
PROF: (1920)
SHAND AND SHAND: (1917)
SHEPPARD, WILL: (1918)
SILBINI: (1918)
SINCLAIR, TOM: comedian. (1917-18)

SINCLAIR, MIDDLE: (1918)
SKINNER AND GOURLAY: (1918)
SLAVIN AND THOMPSON: (1917)
SNOOKER AND POOLE: (1916)
STANLEY, TED: (1917-18)
STARRS, THE THREE: (1916)
STEPHENS, OLIVE: (1918)
STERLING AND LOVE: (1918)
STEWART AND LORRAINE: (1918)
STEWART, MAUD: (1916-18)
ST LEONARDS, THE: (1919)
STOFF, LIEUTENANT: military ventriloquist (1916)
SULLY AND TINE: specialty artistes. (1916)

ZIGOMARS, THE TWO: (1918)
Z'S, THE TWO: (1918)

TAUCHERT, ARTHUR: (1916)
TAYLOR, CONNIE: (1919)
TAYLOR, ELOISE: (1917-18)
THOMPSON, LYLIA: (1916)
TILTON AND WEST: (1916)
TOOHEY: (1916) [Most probably Will Toohey]
TROMP, ADDIE: (1918)
TURNER, "BAB": (1918)

UNITY FOUR, THE: (1916)
UPSIDE-DOWN WRIGHT: (1918)
UREN, FRANK: juggler. (1916)

VERNON AND SINCLAIR: (1916)
VERNON AND VIOLET: (1918)
VESTO AND JULLYAN: (1917)
VICTOR, CLOTHILDA AND CO: (1918) aka Victor and
 Daughter
VICTOR THE GREAT: (1916)
VIOLINI: (1917)

WALKER AND CAMPBELL: (1918)
WALKER, WHIMSICAL: (1918-19)
WALLACE, SAM: (1918)
WALTON, ALICE: (1917)
WALTON, VERA: (1917-18)
WARD, LALLA: (1918)
WARNE, DAVE: (1917)
WATSON AND WALDRON: (1919)
WESTON AND HILL: (1916)
WILKINSON, JAMES: (1917) [ex Scottish Meisters/S
 Mngr for Tivoli Follies]
WILLIAMS, FRED: Dickens character impersonator.
 (1916)
WILSON, BERT: (1917-18)
WILSON, PEGGY: (1917)
WILSON, REHEAD: (1916)
WINIFRED AND LUMLEY: (1919)
WINTERS TROUPE OF DOGS, CAPTAIN: (1920)
WHITE, CHARLES: (1917)
WHITEHEAD, GEORGE: (1917, 1919)

APPENDIX C

NSW/QLD TOURS: 1901-1918, 1927 and 1929

For updated information on these tours see the Australian Variety Theatre Archive:
<http://ozvta.com/> (or at Pandora <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-143747>)

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This appendix is presented as a companion to Chapter Five of the thesis. It has been designed to provide a more accessible base from which to locate tour details. Each year the company is known to have toured Queensland, including several New South Wales centres visited en route and on return, is presented and includes such details (if known) as:

The Year • The company's touring name • Manager/Business Manager • Advance Representative
 Operator • Music Director • Artists touring with the company • Moving Pictures • Farces
 Sideshow attractions (such as Waxworks, Cycloramas, Automatic Machines) •
 Tour Itinerary (providing those dates that have been established so far, and including the venues for each tour date).

Note: The dates provided as part of each year's itinerary are both the opening and closing dates, and are separated by a dash (-). If there is no closing date shown after the dash, this indicates that no such date has been located. If an opening date is not followed by a dash, this indicates that the season was one night only.

There are no specific Townsville dates provided prior to 1912 due to the unavailability of Townsville's Daily Bulletin. Townsville has been included within the itineraries before 1912 (with specific dates) only if the position of the season within the tour is approximately known. Cairns does not seem to have been part of the regular itinerary until 1909, and hence there are no dates prior to that year.

* Symbols/Abbreviations:

- # : placed before a name indicates that this artist was engaged for the second half of a tour.
- θ : played the first half of a tour only (and replaced by an artist with #)
- IS : Illustrated song
- imp: Imported

1901

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND VAUDEVILLE COMPANY TOUR

The tour advertises "all the latest Novelties from London and Paris." This is Harry Clay's first known tour under his own name and as proprietor. Travelling with the tour, but not in any performance capacity are A.R. Abbott and Mary Clay, the latter believed to be either Harry's mother or older sister. The MDM: notes that (in Maitland at least) Harry Clay's name is "sufficient to guarantee that he is bringing along a first- class entertainment" (MDM: 14 Feb. 1901, 2).

- **Advance Rep:** Jimmy W. Boyle; **Manager:** Harry Clay; **Musical Director/Pianist:** Prof T.W. Rhodes;
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - Will Bracey (musical artist/banjo/dancer/blackface/tambos)
 - Harry Clay (tenor/interlocutor/dancer/club swinging)
 - Essie Clay (child vocalist, aged 13)
 - Kate Henry (contralto)
 - Flo Murray (serio)
 - Smith Sisters [Ethel and ? (step dancers)
 - Sam Wilson (comedian/character artist/blackface/bones)
- **Farces:** The Ball's Going On (written by Johnny Cowan, previously performed in Queensland by The Empire Minstrel and Specialty Co., 1893), The Felon on the Rocks, A Game of Cards, A Little Boy Lost, Where Have I Seen That Face.
- **Waxworks:** Incl. The Breelong Blacks [the Governors] (in tableaux), Queen Victoria, Duke of York, Cecil Rhodes, Bismark, Paul Kruger, Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, Lord Butler, Ned Kelly, Pope Leo XIII, and Deeming (criminal).
- **Other attractions:**
 - Photographs of the Commonwealth procession, returned soldiers from the Spanish- American war, and panoramic views of England, America and the Continent (viewed with the aid of magnifying glasses, which brings "out some of the scenes with great distinctiveness" (MDM: 19 Feb. 1901, 2).
 - Theatrephone: selections given prior to performance, and is "worked on the same principle as the gramophone" (MDM: 19 Feb. 1901, 2).
 - Automatic (penny-in-the-slot) machines dispensing a delineation of one's character or packets of lollies etc.
- **Known tour dates:**

NSW:	West Maitland	18 Feb.	-		(Town Hall)
	Tamworth	5 Mar	-	6 Mar	(Oddfellows' Hall)
Qld:	Toowoomba	12 Mar	-	16 Mar	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	18 Mar	-	25 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	26 Mar	-	4 Apr	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	6 Apr	-	13 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	6 May	-	18 May	(School of Arts)
	Mackay	21 May	-	25 May	(School of Arts)
	Townsville				
	Charters Towers	1 Jul	-	13 Jul	(Theatre Royal)

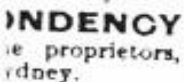
1902

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND VAUDEVILLE COMPANY TOUR

- **Advance Rep:** Jimmy Boyle; **Manager:** Harry Clay; **Music Director/Pianist:** T.W. Rhodes;
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:** # Carlton and Coleman (comics/dancer)
Harry Clay (tenor/interlocutor/IS)
Essie Clay (juvenile singer/IS)
Richard A. 'Dick' Davis (Irish comic/endman/character artist)
Walter Edwards (baritone/endman)
Stella Gonzales (contortionist/serpentine acts)
Nina Gonzales ['Little Nina'] (serio/dancer)
Amy Leslie (contralto/serio/soubrette)
Bobby Widgery (miniature 'pocket' comedian)
Jack F. Williams (patter/dancer/endman)
- **Waxworks:** Incl. Breelong Blacks [The Governors], King Edward VII, Queen Alexandria, Joseph Chamberlain, H.R.H. The Duke of York, Paul Kruger (South African President), General Roberts, Dr Leyds, Pope Leo XIII, Fauré (France), President McKinley (USA).
- **Farces:** Hurrah for Casey (known to have been performed in 1894 by Slade Murray's Oxford Co.), On the Fire, A Lord for the Night.
- **Other attractions:**
 - Illustrated songs: "The latest and popular songs illustrated with the latest slides from New York and London."
 - Edison's latest audio machine - the "Polyphone," along with automatic machines.
 - A Cosmorama depicting incidents from the Boer, Spanish/American, and China wars.
- **Known tour dates:**

NSW:	West Maitland	27 Feb	-	8 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Tamworth	10 Mar	-		(Central Hall)
Qld:	Toowoomba	18 Mar	-		(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough ~	26 Mar	-	3 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Bundaberg	4 Apr	-	8 Apr	(Queen's Hall)
	Mt Morgan	11 Apr	-	15 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton	16 Apr	-	26 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Charters Towers	1 May	-	4 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Townsville				
	Mackay	4 Jun	-	9 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Bundaberg	12 Jun	-	13 Jun	(Queen's Hall)
	Maryborough	14 Jun	-		(Town Hall)
NSW:	Gympie	16 Jun	-	21 Jun	(Theatre Royal)
	Toowoomba	3 Jul	-	5 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	West Maitland	10 Jul	-	14 Jul	(Town Hall)

NOTE: - No Gympie season on first leg.
~ Final night of Maryborough season included a pre-show performance by the Naval Band.



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1903

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND COMEDY COMPANY TOUR

Although the company toured for most of its dates with only a piano accompaniment, Maitland's Daily Mercury notes that there was a full orchestral accompaniment for the chorus number during the return visit to West Maitland in July.

- **Advance Rep:** Jimmy Boyle; **Manager:** Harry Clay; **Music Director/Pianist:** T.W. Rhodes
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - Arthur Alberts (comic/endman)
 - Essie Clay (juvenile singer)
 - Harry Clay (tenor/Interlocutor/IS)
 - Wally Edwards (baritone/IS)
 - Harry Elliot (comic/endman)
 - Kate Henry (contralto/serio)
 - Jessie Lee
 - Bertha St. Lawrence (sketch artist)
 - Ted St. Lawrence (sketch artist/endman)
 - # Ted Sutton
- **New waxworks:** The Kenniffs, George Bernard Shaw, Dr Leyds, Sir Henry Parkes, and The Bearded Lady.
- **Farces:** The Mysterious House, Razor Jim, The Chinese Servant, Cupid's Artful Dodge, An Untamed Savage, Zic Johnson, The Baby Elephant, Slattery's Home.
- **Illustrated songs:** Advertised as the latest American songs and slides.
- **Stereoscopic views:** Presentation of the King's Coronation, and New York.
- **Known tour dates:**

NSW:	West Maitland	6 Mar	-	14 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Tamworth	16 Mar	-		(Central Hall)
Qld:	Toowoomba	20 Mar	-		(Town Hall)
	Maryborough	28 Mar	-	4 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Mt Morgan	7 Apr	-	11 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton	13 Apr	-	18 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Mackay	21 Apr	-	25 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Bundaberg	28 May	-	1 Jun	(Queen's Theatre)
	Gympie	2 Jun	-	8 Jun	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	9 Jun	-	17 Jun	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	18 Jun	-	20 Jun	(Town Hall)
NSW:	West Maitland	6 Jul	-	11 Jul	(Town Hall)

NOTE: - No Gympie or Bundaberg seasons on first leg

THEATRE ROYAL

TO-NIGHT (SATURDAY), 28th APRIL.
LAST NIGHT OF THE SEASON, and of the most popular theatre that has played in Rockhampton for years.

HARRY'S DRAMATIC COMPANY

EVENING by UNIVERSAL REQUEST, the magnificent play and superb stage pageant

IN THE SEA GIVES UP ITS DEAD.

THE PLAY. A WEIRD PLAY. AN EXCITING PLAY, replete with Sensation, Rollicking Roaring Humour.

POPULAR PRICES—3s., 2s., 1s.; the Little Ones Half-price. Commence at 8. Box Plan at MUNRO'S.

STANLEY GRANT, Business Manager.

NOTED.

WES in large and small
Highest price given.
O., Denison-street.

DESSUM, Bear, Kanga-
Wallaby Skins. Highest
B. MAY & CO., Deni-

od SLAUGHTERMAN
butcher. Must under-
stand but competent and
apply. W. H. B. MAY
Skin Merchants, Deni-

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Y RESIDENCE, AL-
T Victoria Parade,
H. M. GERAITY.

AGE, Canning-street,
every convenience;
good Tenant. M.

FREE-WHEEL, BL-
order. Apply "A."

AMUSEMENTS, MEETINGS, &c.

SCHOOL OF ARTS.

TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT.

LAST NIGHT OF

CLAY'S COMPANY.

NEW PROGRAMME,
ALSO

BABY SHOW.

FINEST BABY RECEIVE AT IS.

Admission, 1s.; Children (10),
Half-price.

THIS SATURDAY AFTERNOON, at 2.15.

CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE.

Admission. Children, 3d. Adults, 6d.

II. SENATOR T. GLASSEY will
Address Meetings of Lady Electors
in Masonic Hall on MONDAY AFTER-

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1904

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND COMEDY COMPANY TOUR

- **Business Manager:** J.W. Boyle; **Advance Rep:** Lou Courtney; **Music Director:** T.W. Rhodes; **Limelight Operator:** A.T. McIntyre
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - Arthur Alberts (eccentric comedian)
 - Jack Bryant (ball-punching)
 - Harry Clay (the "favourite tenor"/IS)
 - Essie Clay (the young contralto)
 - Mrs John Coleman (serio and scarecrow dancer)
 - Lou Courtney (juggler and equilibrist)
 - Walter Edwards ("the popular baritone"/IS)
 - Tom Edwards (comedian and acrobat)
 - # Bob Foster (comic/character sketches)
 - Lottie Lorne (singer)
 - The Phillip Sisters (duettists and dancers)
 - Will Wallace (the "Black Diamond")
- **Waxworks:** Incl. The Royal Family, The Pope, Digby Grand and Jones (the Auburn murderers), Mrs Sangal (the husband murderer), Todd and Madame Olga (the 'boot-box tragedy)
- **Cosmorama:** Contains views of London and Paris by night. The return leg includes: stereoscopic views of Paris, Venice, Fort Alexandria, the Suez Canal and Mt Vesuvius in action.
- **Illustrated songs:** Showing lakes, ruins, blarney stones, old castles, and beautiful scenes from Ireland. MDM: notes that "the dissolving effects and the representation of a snow storm were beautiful and realistic. The lantern is of the latest American pattern, and the pictures are thrown on the screen sharply and clearly" (MDM: 10 Mar 1904, 2).
- **Farces:** The Mysterious House, Razor Jim, The Chinese Servant, Dr Cutemup, Johnston's Dead, The Coming Man, The Fellow that Looks Like Me, The Coal-heaver's Revenge.
- **Known tour dates:**

NSW:	Bathurst	27 Feb	-		(School of Arts)
	West Maitland	9 Mar	-	18 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Newcastle	19 Mar	-		(Theatre Royal)
Qld:	Toowoomba	29 Mar	-	2 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	5 Apr-			(Town Hall)
	Maryborough	14 Apr	-	18 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Mt Morgan	20 Apr	-	23 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton	25 Apr	-	30 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Charters Towers	17 May	-	31 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Mackay	8 Jun	-	13 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton	16 Jun	-	18 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Bundaberg	25 Jun	-	30 Jun	(Queen's Theatre)
	Maryborough	7 Jul	-	11 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	12 Jul	-	20 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	21 Jul	-	27 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	28 Jul	-	30 July	(Town Hall)
NSW:	Tamworth	1 Aug	-		(Central Hall)
	West Maitland	5 Aug	-	11 Aug	(Town Hall)

NOTE: - No Tamworth season on first leg, possibly due to influx of companies in town for show week
 - No Bundaberg season on first leg of tour

1905

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND COMEDY COMPANY TOUR

Tour advertised as "the most up-to-date company now touring Australia" (TC: 11 Mar. 1905, 1). This tour was Clay's first utilisation of film. They are advertised as being screened on the Bio-Zie-Tro-Scope (Biopictroscope), "producing the very latest and up-to-date moving pictures" for moving picture songs and films.

- **Business Manager:** J.W. Boyle; **Music Director:** T.W. Rhodes; **Advance Rep:** Lou Courtney; **Film/Limelight Operator:** J.T. McIntyre
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - Amy Blackie (descriptive singer)
 - Harry Clay (interlocutor/tenor/IS)
 - # Lou Courtney (balance act)
 - Wally Edwards (baritone/IS)
 - Harry Elliot (singer/dancer)
 - Nina Gonzales (coon singer/acrobatic dancer/tumbler)
 - Kate Henry (contralto/serio-comic)
 - Blanche Leyfield (serio/comic/dancer)
 - Joe Rox (comic/tambo)
 - Little Claude Sullivan (child singer)
 - Ted Tutty (comic/bones)
 - # Cissy Wakeford
- **Films:** Seven Castles of the Devil [25 mins] ("One of the greatest London pantomime successes of recent years. The representation (is) an exact reproduction of the pantomime as presented to London audiences.")
- **Cosmorama:** Scenes in connection with the Russo-Japanese war.
- **Waxworks:** Incl. King Edward, Queen Alexandria
- **Farces:** The Two Statues, The Sioux Indian, The Ball is Going On, Zic Johnson, The Coming Man, Hard to Kill, Slocum's Dog, The Jealous Husband.
- **Known tour dates:**

NSW:	West Maitland	9 Mar	-	15 Mar	(Town Hall)
Qld:	Toowoomba	17 Mar	-	25 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	27 Mar	-	3 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	5 Apr			(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	13 Apr	-	17 Apr	(Theatre Royal)
	Mt Morgan	19 Apr	-	22 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton	24 Apr	-	29 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Charters Towers	16 May	-	30 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Mackay	7 Jun	-	12 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton	20 Jun	-	22 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Bundaberg	24 Jun	-	28 Jun	(Queen's Theatre)
	Maryborough	3 Jul	-	5 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	6 Jul	-	11 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	13 Jul	-	19 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	20 Jul	-	25 Jul	(Town Hall)

NOTE: - No shows in Tamworth (both legs)
 - No Bundaberg season on first leg of tour

OWERS, TUESDAY, MAY 16, 1905.

Amusements.

THE BRIGAND CHIEF. In the Park,
NEXT SUNDAY AFTERNOON.
Look out for him.

T H E A T R E R O Y A L.
FOR A SHORT SEASON ONLY.

MAY 16 || TUESDAY NEXT || MAY 16
MAY 16 || TUESDAY NEXT || MAY 16

CLAY'S CLAY'S
Waxworks and Comedy Company

NEW ARTISTS,
NEW ILLUSTRATED SONGS,
NEW PICTURES,
EVERYTHING NEW

THE STRONGEST COMBINATION
at
LOWEST PRICES.

1/- ADMISSION. 1/-

Children under 10 Half-price.

LOU COURTNEY,
Representative.

EVERYBODY invited to the Park
NEXT SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

A BRIGHT and Sparkling Selection
of Music, in the Park, NEXT SUN-
DAY AFTERNOON, by the FIRE

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1906

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND COMEDY COMPANY TOUR

- For the first time Harry Clay does not accompany the tour due to commitments with the Sydney circuit.
- **Manager:** Jimmy Boyle; **Music Director:** W.G. Farrell
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - Julia Braille (singer/pianist)
 - Wally Edwards (bass-baritone/IS)
 - Frank Herbert (baritone/IS)
 - Lily Hulbert (mezzo-soprano)
 - Tom Leonard (cornerman)
 - Frank Melvin (cornerman/acrobat/contortionist/coon singer)
 - The Smith Sisters (Ethel and May) (serio-comics/dancers)
 - Lottie Southwell (serio/comic)
 - Joe Rox (cornerman)
 - Ted Tutty (cornerman/singer/comic)
- **Films:** Screened via the Sperantoscope (the latest machine from England which depicted "the latest and most exciting films shown in the States of the great French Steeplechase"). It is the first motor driven projector used by the company. The Townsville Bulletin is quoted as describing the pictures as "unanimously declared to be by along way the best ever shown in Townsville" (qtd. DM: 1 June 1907, 2). The films screened on tour incl. The Great French Steeplechase and The Life of an American Fireman.
- **Farces:** Incl. Johnny Come Lately, Blow the Trumpet, That Boy Pete, Laughing Gas, Bibbs and Dribbs, Hurrah for Casey, The Sioux Indian.
- **Known tour dates:**

Qld:	Toowoomba	3 Apr	-	9 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	10 Apr	-	17 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Maryborough	19 Apr	-	25 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	27 Apr	-	5 May	(School of Arts)
	Mackay	6 Jun	-	11 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton ~	19 Jun	-	26 Jun	(City Markets/School of Arts)
	Maryborough	9 Jul	-	11 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	12 Jul	-	18 July	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	19 Jul	-	23 July	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	30 Jul	-	4 Aug	(Theatre Royal)

NOTE: ~ The return Rockhampton season was played at the City Markets, due to Show Week commitments at the School of Arts. The final two nights, however, were played at that venue.

- No Tamworth dates (at least for first leg).
- No information available regarding Bundaberg 1906, due to missing issues of the BM:

1907

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND COMEDY COMPANY TOUR

- **Business Manager:** Jimmy Boyle; **Theatregraph/Limelight Operator:** A.T. MacIntyre; **Music Director/Pianist:** Jessie Gray

- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee 6d; 3d (children)

- **Artists:**
 - Tod Callaway (comic/singer)
 - # Eileen Capell
 - Joe Cowan (comic/singer/endman)
 - Laura Diamond (singer/instrumentalist - mandolin/banjo/dancer)
 - Wally Edwards (baritone/IS)
 - Ruby Franklin (serio-comic/dancer)
 - Will Harley (acrobat/comedian/singer)
 - # Tom Hedley (musical act, billed as the "Musical Moke")
 - Stan Kerridge (baritone/IS)
 - Alma Lyndon (serio/dancer)
 - Lyn Murray [male] (singer/endman/comic)
 - May Reade (singer/IS)
 - # Andy Roberts (comedian/patterologist)
 - Ted Tutty (comic/singer/dancer/cornerman)

NOTE: sketch partners on tour are Will Harley and Ruby Franklin.

- **Waxworks:** Incl. Bill Squires (Australian heavy-weight boxer), Richard Seddon (recently deceased NZ premier), Thomas Quinlan, John R. Brown, Stanford White (murdered American millionaire), Harriet and Edward Roberts, Barney Kieran.
- **Cosmorana:** Depicted places of interest in London, Sydney and "foreign climes."
- **Farces:** Incl. The Lawyer's Clerk, Dr Slocum's Dog, The Automations, Rumpus, The Wig-makers, School, Fast and Slow, Loved, Divorced, and Poisoned.
- **Films:** Screened via the Theatregraph (the latest Edison machine) which were billed as being the latest from London. They included: A Detective Chase Around the World, In Search of an Adventure, The Haunted House, The Starvelings (depicting the ups and downs of the street Arabs of London), The Hundred Tricks, The Drunkard's Dream, A Tragedy at Sea, The Custom House Officers, A Fathers Honour.

- **Known tour dates:**

Qld:	Toowoomba	1 Apr	-	8 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	9 Apr	-		(Town Hall)
	Maryborough	18 Apr	-	22 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Mt Morgan	1 May	-	4 May	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton	6 May	-	11 May	(School of Arts)
	Charters Towers	27 May	-	8 Jun	(Theatre Royal)
	Rockhampton ~	24 Jun	-	26 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	27 Jun	-	29 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Bundaberg	2 Jul	-	3 Jul	(Queen's Theatre)
	Maryborough	4 Jul	-	6 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	8 Jul	-	11 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	29 Jul	-		(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	5 Aug	-	10 Aug	(Town Hall)

NOTE: ~ Rockhampton Carnival Week
 - No Bundaberg season on first leg.
 - No information regarding Mackay, due to unavailability of microfilm

1908

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND COMPANY

- **Tour Manager:** Jimmy Boyle; **Music Director/Pianist:** William G. Farrell; **Theatregraph/Limelight Operator:** Lou Courtney
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - # Joe Cowan (comic/cornerman)
 - Frank Herbert (baritone/descriptive singer/IS)
 - # Eva Hughes (serio and soubrette)
 - Frank King (descriptive/dramatic singer)
 - Pearl Lovell (serio/character comedienne)
 - The Martin Sisters [Phyllis and Doris] (duettists/dancers)
 - Con Moreni (the 'tired comedian'/singer/cornerman)
 - Will Rollow (comedian/singer/specialty artist/cornerman)
 - Will White (coon singer/eccentric dancer/cornerman)
 - Thelma Woods (contralto/IS)
- **Cosmorama:** Depicting cosmoramic views of Japan and other places of interest.
- **Waxworks:** include - Victor Trumper, M.A. Noblo ("Australia's greatest cricketer"), Henry Thaw (American Millionaire murderer), Harry Baxter (Newtown murderer).
- **Farces:** Incl. The Indian Chief, Dr Cutemup, The Haunted Pawnshop, On the Fire, The Baby Elephant, Love Versus Surgery, The Theatregraph, Johnny Came too Late, Quiet Lodgings.
- **Films:** include - Jim's Apprenticeship, Stop Thief, The Cripple, Short-sighted Cyclist, Catch the Kid, The Lone Trapper [1500 ft long, from London] (return visits), The Indian's Revenge (from London), The Elixir of Strength, The Wedding Bells, The Butterfly Catcher, The Angler's Dream, The Reckless Horseman (from London), and The Straw Man.
- **Known tour dates:**

Qld:	Toowoomba	20 Apr	-	27 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	28 Apr	-	2 May	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	7 May	-	11 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	12 May	-	15 May	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	27 May	-	2 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Mackay	9 Jun	-	13 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Charters Towers	24 Jun	-	4 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	Rockhampton	13 Jul	-	18 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Bundaberg	21 Jul	-	22 Jul	(Queen's Theatre)
	Maryborough	24 Jul	-	25 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	31 Jul	-	1 Aug	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	3 Aug	-	10 Aug	(Town Hall)

Admission, 6d. Grandstand, 6d extra.
Children, Half-price. 528

TOWN HALL.

TWO NIGHTS, commencing WEDNES-
DAY OCTOBER 28.

Harry Clay's Dramatic Company,

Headed by Miss **ESSIE CLAY** (the Young
Australian Actress) and **ALBERT
LUCAS**, supported by a specially-organ-
ised Dramatic Company.

First Production,

"The World Against Her."

THURSDAY,

THE IRISHMAN

Popular Prices Admission, 1s; Re-
served Seats, 1s extra. Box-plan at Mr.
W. B. Darker's, where Seats may be Re-
served free of charge.

JACK CAMPBELL, Representative.

Tea-Meetings.

ROSEWOOD STATE SCHOOL.

THE ANNUAL TREAT in connection
with the above School will be held
on King's Birthday, November 9th.

ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

and have a good day's sport.

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1908

CLAY'S DRAMATIC COMPANY TOUR

The Dramatic Company was headed by Essie Clay and Albert Lucas. Harry Clay appeared in bit parts, mostly in singing roles. He is known to have sung "Ireland's Rights" during The Irishman and "Gallants of England" during Camille.

- **Tour Manager:** Harry Clay; **Advance Rep:** Jack Campbell
- **Scenery:** James Hutchins
- **Admission prices:** Generally 1/- ; with 1/- extra for reserved seats.

- **Company:**

W. Baufield	F. Leslie
Pearl Best	G. Lester
Jack Blackler	G. Leverand
Harry Clay	Dickson Loftus
Essie Clay	Albert Lucas
John Cosgrove	Mr Mahony
Sydney Everett	Harry Norman (late S Mngr of Bland Holt's Co)
Dorothy Gall (child)	Lancelot Vane
Irene Gough	Mr Wellbridge
S. Harrington	Walter Whyte
Mrs Barry Lane	Will Wynand
Ada Laurence	

- **The plays:**

<u>The World Against Her</u> by Frank Harvey	(TWAH)
<u>The Irishman</u>	(TI)
<u>Camille</u> by Alexander Dumas fils	(C)
<u>The Marriage of Mary Anne</u>	(MMA)

- **The Cast:**

Essie Clay: Madge Carlton (The World Against Her); Norah Desmond (The Irishman); Marguerite (Camille); Mary Anne (The Marriage of Mary Anne)

Albert Lucas: James Carlton (The World Against Her); Owen Kavenagh (The Irishman); Armand Duval (Camille)

Harry Clay: sang "Ireland's Rights"(TI), and "Gallants of England" (C)

John Cosgrove: Gilbert Blair [villain] (TWAH); Larry O'Rourke (TI); Baron De Varville (C)

Ada Lawrence: Essie's understudy; Jenny Clegg (TWAH); Nanine (C); Kate Kearny (TI)

Harry Norman: Simon Glegg (TWAH); Sir Owen Kavenagh (TI)

Sydney Everett: Robert Danvers (TWAH); Father Kelly (Irishman)

Mrs Barry Lane: Sally Millet (TWAH); Mrs Hennessy (TI)

Lancelot Vane: Harold Venron (TWAH); Felix Blake (TI)

Irene Gough: Ned (TWAH); Molley O'Flaherty (TI)

Pearl Best: Lucy Danvers (TWAH); Eileen O'Driscoll (TI)

Dorothy Gall: Annie [Carlton's child] (TWAH); Ruby O'Connor (TI)

Walter Whyte: Capt. Frank Delahunt (TI). He sings "Sally Horner" during The Irishman.

Will Wynand: Bob Millet [comic element in Punch and Judy show, including 2 comic songs] (TWAH); Mickey Wheelan (TI)

G. Leverand: Dick Markland (TWAH);

Jack Blackler: John Heslop (TWAH)

Mr Mahony: Jim Thwaites (TWAH)

Mr Wellbridge: Silas Jenkins (TWAH)

Dickson Loftus: Abe Walters (TWAH)

F. Leslie: Knocky Moles (TWAH)

S. Harrington: Melton (TWAH)

G. Lester: Liz Markland (TWA)

• **Known dates:**

NSW:	Sydney	9 Oct	-		(Royal Standard)
Qld:	Rockhampton	10 Oct	-	14 Oct	(Theatre Royal)
	Mt Morgan	15 Oct	-		
	Bundaberg	20 Oct	-	22 Oct	(Queen's Theatre)
	Maryborough	23 Oct	-	24 Oct	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	26 Oct	-	27 Oct	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	28 Oct	-	29 Oct	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	30 Oct	-	3 Nov	(Town Hall)
	Warwick	4 Nov	-		(Town Hall)
NSW:	Singleton	16 Nov	-	17 Nov.	(Mechanics Institute)

NOTE: No Charters Towers season found (Sept/Oct)

QUOTATIONS and REVIEWS

(Ipswich) The company comprises a number of accomplished artists, and consequently their presentation of the drama [The World Against Her] was of a particularly thrilling character, and the acting was of an unquestionably high order, while the inspiring nature of the music supplied by an orchestra, and the effective scenery, appealed to the audience in a marked degree. The admirable blending of tragedy and pathos with humour and gaiety produced an effort which was not lost upon the enthusiastic audience. The "star" was of course, Miss Essie Clay, whose representation of an injured wife, was decidedly realistic, and it earned for her unmistakable signs of approval (QT: 29 Oct. 1908, 7).

(Toowoomba) Harry Clay's Dramatic Company made their initial performance before a Toowoomba audience last evening, and were greeted with a good house considering it was a Friday night - the worst evening for a theatrical entertainment..... Though not as large as a "Clay's audience" the hall was well filled. The utmost excitement prevailed amongst the audience, and the efforts were well applauded again and again (TC: 31 Oct. 1908, 3).

(Toowoomba) Miss Essie Clay as Camille, and who is the youngest actress that has played the character, is recognised as a test piece for our most experienced actresses (TC: 2 Nov. 1908, 1)

1909

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND COMPANY

- **Tour Manager:** Jimmy Boyle; **Music Director:** John "Jack" Hardiman; **Theatregraph/Limelight Operator:** Albert Dettmann.
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d. Note: Cairns admission prices were 2/- and 1/-, with reserved seats 6d extra.
- **Artists:**
 - Erne Delavale (descriptive singer)
 - Wally Edwards (baritone)
 - θ Lulu Eugene (serio/dancer)
 - Will Gilbert (the "loose-legged comedian")
 - θ Essie Jennings (soprano)
 - Tom Leonard (comic/specialty artist)
 - # Warwick Lumley (comedian)
 - # Nellie Morrison (serio)
 - # Major Meyers [Victor Meyers] (midget comedian)
 - # Olga Pennington (balladist)
 - # Alf Rockley (acrobatic comedian)
 - The Smith Sisters (duettists/dancers)
 - Ted Tutty (eccentric comedian)
 - Lily Vockler (serio/soubrette)
 - θ Will Wynand (comic/singer)
- **Waxworks:** includes - Tommy Burns, Jack Johnson.
- **Farces:** Incl. The Ball is Going On, Blow the Trumpet, The Clockmaker, Cupid's Artful Dodge, The Mysterious House.
- **Films:** Incl. The Witch's Kiss, William the Poacher, An Affair of Honour, Gunner Moir and Tiger Smith (English Boxing Championship), Love Conquers All, His First Row, A Mother's Secret, A Kind-hearted Gentleman, Pretty Typist, The Half-caste's Revenge, Her Sweetheart when a Boy, Durant Family at the Seaside, The Lone Trapper.
- **Known dates:**

Qld:	Toowoomba	15 Mar	-	22 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	23 Mar	-		(Town Hall)
	Gympie	31 Mar	-	5 Apr	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	6 Apr	-	8 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	20 Apr	-	27 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	28 Apr	-		(School of Arts)
	Charters Towers	19 May	-	29 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Cairns ~	3 Jun	-	8 Jun	(Shire Hall)
	Rockhampton	21 Jun	-	24 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	25 Jun	-	26 Jun	(School of Arts)
	Maryborough	6 Jul	-	7 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	8 Jul	-	12 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	13 Jul	-	17 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	19 Jul	-	24 Jul	(Town Hall)

NOTE: ~ First time the company played in Cairns.

A-~~REAL~~ REVELATION, WHICH ALL SHOULD SEE.

ALSO

THE GREAT NAVAL REVIEW.

A fine picture of the world's greatest Naval Display, giving a graphic description of every feature of Britain's great navy, and

THE BLUEJACKETS' MARCH THROUGH LONDON

A most interesting and instructive picture.

ALSO A CROWD OF OTHERS. ABSOLUTELY THE FINEST DISPLAY OF PICTURES EVER SHOWN IN BRISBANE.

NEW ILLUSTRATED SONGS BY MR. CHAS. HOWARD.

KING'S LYCEUM ORCHESTRA, UNDER SIGNOR BENVENUTI.

PRICES: 6d. to 2/. Booking at Paling's;

T. J. HENSON, Manager.

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

Under the direction of Mr. HARRY CLAY Lessee HAROLD ASHTON.

TO-NIGHT,

TO-NIGHT.

Emphatic Success of the World-renowned Tragedian,

WALTER BENTLEY,

Supported by MISS ESSIE CLAY and a Powerful DRAMATIC COMPANY.

T O - N I G H T.

T O - N I G H T.

In the play that brought fame and fortune to the great actor, the late Sir Henry Irving, and acknowledged by Press and public as one of Mr. Bentley's greatest impersonations.

"THE BELLS,"

OR THE MURDER OF THE POLISH JEW.

Mathias

WALTER BENTLEY.

The "Sydney Morning Herald" says:—"Although Mr. Walter Bentley has given playgoers several examples of his ability, he has done nothing to so thoroughly stamp him as an actor of exceptional power as when he plays the part of Mathias, in "The Bells." Mr. Bentley was put to greater test than in other parts, and the rapid change of voice and the manner from high invective to impassioned pleading were cleverly dealt with, until at last, when under the influence of the mesmerist, the whole story of the murder has to be gone through again.

"THE AUDIENCE WAS HELD SPELLBOUND.

"The effort was supreme and the success emphatic, appreciation being shown by the fact that when the curtain fell the audience cheered until Mr. Bentley came forward and bowed his acknowledgment no less than six times."

POPULAR PRICES: 3/, 2/, 1/. Plan at Paling's. Day sales at Black's and Marble Bar.

CLAUDE E. WEBB.

DUTTON PARK FETE.		MEETINGS.	
THIS AFTERNOON:—Music, Refreshments, Sweets, Produce and Work Stalls, Motor Car, Fish Pond, Merry-go-round, &c.		OXLEY ELECTORATE.	
THIS EVENING:—MOVING PICTURES and Illustrated Songs, in Garden		Mr. DENHAM will Address Electors as under:—	
		Chair will be taken at 8 o'clock.	

1909

WALTER BENTLEY QUEENSLAND TOUR

A twenty member troupe, with approximately nine production crew. This company was not the same as that which helped produce Bentley's season at the Criterion Theatre (Sydney).

Pre-tour production, 10 nights at the Criterion Hotel from 10 July, under management of Stanley McKay (TT: July 1909,19; Aug. 1909, 18 / SMH 9 July 1909, 2; 10 July 1909, 2; 12 July, 2, 1909]

- **Direction:** Walter Bentley; **Producer:** Harry Clay; **Tour Manager:** James Boyle.
- **Admission prices:** 3/-; 2/-; 1/-
- **Company:**

Walter Bentley	Lane Vane	J.B. Atholwood	A. Egan
Essie Clay	Patricia Pope	Johnstone Weir	Maurice Nodin
S.A. Fitzgerald	Len Buderick	Helen Furgus	Roma Lauri
Winifred Hunter	May Lang		
- **Plays:**

<u>Hamlet</u> by William Shakespeare	(H)
<u>The Courier of Lyons</u>	(CL)
<u>David Garrick</u> by Tom Robertson	(DG)
<u>The Bells; Or, The Murder of the Polish Jew</u>	(TB)
<u>Crammond Brig</u>	(CB)
<u>His Last Legs</u>	(HLL)
- **Scenery:** Most likely they were designed and built by Harry Whaite (who designed Bentley and Stanley McKay's Sydney season at the Criterion.
- **Costumes:** Again, probably made by Bentley and McKay's costume designer - Zenda.
- **Walter Bentley:** Hamlet, David Garrick, Jock Howieson, the farmer (CB), Mathias (TB), Dubosc and Lesurques, (CL)
Felix O'Callagan (HLL)
- **Essie Clay:** Ophelia (H), Annette (TB), Ada Ingot (DG), Julie (CL)
- **Helen Furgus:** Queen Gertrude (H); Mrs Smith (DG); Mrs Howieson (CB); Catherine (TB)
- **J.B. Atholwood:** Laertes (H); Squire Chivey (DG); Christian (TB)
- **S.A. Fitzgerald:** The Ghost (H); Mr Brown (DG); Father Walter (TB)
- **Johnstone Weir:** Claudius, King of Denmark (H); the Father (DG)
- **Winifred Hunter:** Horatio (H)
- **Maurice Nodin:** Polonius, Lord Chamberlain (H); Mr Smith (DG)
- **Roma Lauri:** Osrick (H)
- **Lance Vane:** Mr Jones (DG); Hans (TB)
- **Mary Lang:**
- **Miss Pope:** Araminta Brown (DG)

Known tour itinerary is:

Qld:	Brisbane	4 Sept	-	17 Sept	(Her Majesty's Theatre)
	Maryborough	18 Sept	-	19 Sept	(Town Hall)
	Townsville				
	Charters Towers	30 Sept	-	6 Oct	(Theatre Royal)
	Mackay	9 Oct	-	11 Oct	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton	13 Oct	-	16 Oct	(Theatre Royal)
	Mount Morgan	18 Oct	-	19 Oct	(School of Arts)
	Bundaberg	21 Oct	-	23 Oct	(Queen's Hall)
	Toowoomba	28 Oct	-	30 Oct	(Town Hall)

NB: There was no Cairns season.

NSW:	Singleton	2 Nov. -	(Mechanics' Institute)
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QUOTATIONS and REVIEWS

(Brisbane) Mr Bentley's portrayal of the melancholy Prince of Denmark was a revelation, and there is no room for any surprise at the very warm encomiums of which he was the recipient down south. Miss Essie Clay, as Ophelia held the audience spellbound (BC: 6 Sept. 1909, 2)

(Brisbane) Shakespearean drama has had little attention in Brisbane since Mr Bentley appeared here some ten or twelve years ago. A production of a tragedy or a comedy at rare intervals has been all that we have had, not because a more generous measure of production would not have been gladly supported, but because actors and actresses capable of work in these high domains of literary and dramatic art have been few and far between. The warmth and spontaneity of the reception accorded to Mr Bentley... evidenced both the pleasure felt in meeting an old friend, and the appreciation of opportunity afforded of seeing once more an immortal play... Miss Essie Clay's Ophelia was very tender, graceful, pathetic, and picturesque. In the heart-touching mad scene she showed histrionic gifts of a high order, albeit in some of the earlier scenes she was inclined to charge them with too great heaviness. Her musical speaking and singing voice and her pleasing presence all helped to invest her performance with additional interest (BC: 6 Sept. 1909, 6).

(Brisbane) The effort was supreme and the success emphatic, appreciation being shown by the fact that when the curtain fell the audience cheered until Mr Bentley came forward and bowed his acknowledgment no less than six times (BC: 11 Sept. 1909, 2)

(Maryborough) It is a long while since we last had Shakespeare on the stage in Maryborough, not, we believe since Mr Bentley himself was last here, and it was, therefore, not surprising that his production of Hamlet in the Town Hall on Saturday night was greeted with every manifestation of pleasure by a very crowded audience. We now-a-days get so much theatrical balderdash served up in the guise of drama or comedy that an occasional uplifting into the wholesome realm of true dramatic art is very welcome and beneficial...Mr Bentley's interpretation stands beyond reach of ordinary criticism; but it is full of individuality, and consistent and harmonious throughout... Miss Essie Clay's previous appearance in Maryborough had not prepared the audience for such a clever representation of the part as she gave so tender, so graceful, pathetic and picturesque (MC: 20 Sept 1909, 2).

(Charters Towers) Miss Essie Clay, as Ophelia, deserves considerable praise. She is natural, easy and realistic. Her voice is attractive, young, and as her singing in the mad scene pathetically true. The role is a difficult one and Miss Clay is to be congratulated on her admirable interpretation of the part (NM: 1 Oct. 1909, 5).

(Mackay) It has been many years since a Shakespearean play has been staged in Mackay, and those were not wanting who predicted that the production of the immortal tragedy Hamlet, by Mr Walter Bentley and his company on Saturday night would be a "frost." How utterly they were mistaken was conclusively shown by the over-flowing audience that filled every part of the house. In spite of the many disadvantages of the stage of the School of Arts, the play was splendidly mounted, the scenery and costumes being equally effective and although there were about a dozen changes of scene, there were no delays on that score.... At the conclusion Mr Bentley... came before the curtain and having thanked the audience, announced that he would appear tonight in the drama, The Bells and also in the Scotch piece, Crammond Brig... He also referred to the need for a proper theatre for our town and pointed out that it ought not be difficult to get one erected (DM: 11 Oct. 1909, 5)

(Rockhampton) If anyone has played Hamlet in Queensland since Mr Bentley last toured the state he has not come north of Brisbane. Probably the reason is that outside the larger towns poetic drama does not pay. Not even Mr Bentley has dared to restrict his repertoire to Shakespeare; but has diluted it with modern comedy and melodrama (MB: 15 Oct. 1909, 6)

(Toowoomba) It is a long time since a local audience had an acquaintance with Shakespearean drama, and the occurrence happens but rarely to any audience in this state.... Mr Bentley's Hamlet is known far and wide, and it was only to be expected then that a large audience would greet him on his re-appearance (TC: 29 Oct 1909, 3)

1910

CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND VARIETY ENTERTAINERS

Advertising in most places promoted the fact that this was the tenth annual tour by Harry Clay's company. Clay joined tour in Rockhampton on June 30 and performed on the stage after an absence of some years. He is also said to have also reunited with Jimmy Boyle, his old partner of 11 years during this season. The troupe was noted to be "comprised of a practically new band" with "all but one or two (making) their debut to a Toowoomba audience" (TC; 15 Mar. 1910, 3).

- **Tour Manager/Master of Ceremonies:** Jimmy Boyle; **Music Director/Pianist:** Percy Davis; **Operator:** Lou Courtney ("the well-known electrician")
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - Eileen Capel (serio/soubrette/dancer)
 - # Harry Clay (tenor/interlocutor/)
 - θ Bert Corrie (comedian and tenor vocalist)
 - Lou Courtney (operator/plate spinning and balancing)
 - Bruce Drysdale (the quaint comedian)
 - # Harry Elliot (comic/singer)
 - # Lulu Eugene (singer/dancer)
 - θ Phyllis Faye (serio and contortionist),
 - θ Claude Golding (acrobatic comedian, with "thunderstorm vocal powers"),
 - # Frank Herbert (patriotic singer)
 - Stan Kerridge (baritone/IS)
 - θ Clara Keating (the Australian comedienne)
 - Elsie McGuire ("the favourite songstress"/IS singer)
 - Lyla Thompson (serio and character singer)
 - Ted Tutty (comic/"Everybody's favourite")
 - Harry Willis (ventriloquial artist)
 - # Will Wynand (comedian)

NOTE: Will Wynard and Lulu Eugene working as a patter team.

- **Waxworks:** Incl. Peter Bowling "the well-known strike leader" (highlighted in advertising).
- **Films:** Moving Pictures advertised as being imported direct from France and America, and "the clearest and brightest and most up to date films, both humorous and pathetic that could be obtained."
- **Illustrated Songs:** The illustrated songs were also "the very latest procurable."
- **Cosmorama:** Showed scenes from London.
- **Known dates:**

Qld:	Toowoomba	14 Mar	-	21 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	22 Mar	-	29 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	31 Mar	-	5 Apr	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	6 Apr	-	8 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	19 Apr	-	26 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Rockhampton	27 Apr	-		(School of Arts)
	Mackay	3 May	-	7 May	(School of Arts)
	Charters Towers	18 May	-	27 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Cairns	2 Jun	-	8 Jun	(Shire Hall)
	Barcaldine	21 Jun	-	22 Jun	(Shire Hall)
	Longreach	23 Jun	-	27 Jun	
	Rockhampton	30 Jun	-	7 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Mount Morgan	6 Jul	-	9 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Gympie	18 Jul	-	21 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	26 Jul	-	29 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	30 Jul	-	3 Aug	(Town hall)

NOTE: No return Maryborough season found.

Entertainments.

TOWN HALL.

FOR A SHORT SEASON ONLY!

COMMENCING—

TO-NIGHT (TUESDAY),
26th JULY.

CLAY'S

Waxworks & Company

WITH NEW ARTISTS, NEW PICTURES, &c.

Reappearance of—

Mr. HARRY CLAY, MR. WILL WYNAND, MR. HARRY ELLIOTT, MR. FRANK HERBERTE, MISS LULU EUGENE, and all the Old Favourites.

IN NEW ITEMS.

PRICE OF ADMISSION AS USUAL.

Thanks.

I HEREBY return my MOST SINCERE THANKS to the Subscribers and to the Caledonian Society for the Funds raised on my behalf and handed to me by Messrs. Deans, Butchart, and Macgregor. WILLIAM JOHNSTONE. Ipswich. July 24.

ROSEWOOD

WEDNESDAY
TERNOON,
State Schools'

Speaker, A

DUGAND.

THE Machine now fixed—considerable number on FRIDAY last are similar to Pig-Yards.

A GENERAL scribers and the Machine and the Dugandan next, 28th, 8 p and Balance-Sheet and other Business.

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1911

HARRY CLAY'S WAXWORKS AND VAUDEVILLE COMPANY

- **Manager:** Harry Clay; **Musical Director:** T.W. Rhodes; **Operator:** Leslie Cannis
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
Note: Cairns admission price was 2/-, 1/- and 6d for reserved seats.
- **Artists:**
 - Con Carroll (comic/dancer)
 - Harry Clay (tenor/interlocutor)
 - The Coleman Sisters (acrobats/dancers/duetists)
 - # Harry Elliot
 - Lulu Eugene (artist)
 - # Ida Jarvis (serio/dancer)
 - Tom E. Leonard (topical comedian)
 - # Jules and Marzon [Fred Jules and Fred Marzon] (strength and balancing act)
 - Pearl Livingstone (serio/specialty artist)
 - John 'Jack' Ralston (operatic baritone/patter)
 - Will Raynor (English tenor/comic)
 - Tom Rickarts
 - Ted Stanley (the "lively comedian")
 - Harry Williams (singer/dancer)
 - Will Wynand (patter comedian)

NOTE: - Will Wynand and Lulu Eugene working as a patter team.

- Arthur Morley and Elsie Bates are billed to appear in Rockhampton on the return leg, but apparently do not appear.
Harry Clay makes an apology for this on the 10th.

- **Films:** Incl. East Lynne, Sister Angela, From Shadow to Sunshine, The Farmer's Daughter, A Child's Hate, From Fatherhood to Drunkenness, The Gaol Bird.
- **Farces:** Incl. The Insurance Agent, Hurrah for Casey, The Lawyer's Clerk, The Baby Elephant.
- **Waxworks:** New figures include - Crippen, Ivy O'Brian.
- **Known Dates:**

Qld	Toowoomba	11 Mar	-	20 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	21 Mar	-		(Town Hall)
	Gympie	30 Mar	-	4 Apr	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	5 Apr	-	7 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	15 Apr	-	25 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Mackay	2 May	-	6 May	(Star Theatre, late School of Arts)
	Cairns	1 Jun	-	6 Jun	(Shire Hall)
	Mackay ~	20 Jun	-		(Britannia Hall)
	Rockhampton	7 Jul	-	12 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	13 Jul	-	15 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Maryborough	21 Jul	-	22 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	24 Jul	-	25 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	26 Jul	-	28 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	31 Jul	-	2 Aug	(Town Hall)

- NOTE: ~ Return visit for Mackay Show Week (closing performance unknown due to missing issues of the Daily Mercury)
- No Charters Towers season found due to missing issues of the Northern Miner (6-26 May).

1911

STANLEY MACKAY PANTOMIME TOUR

The company presented the shows in a "mammoth moving theatre," utilising a huge mining tent, with some 2,200 capacity. The cast consisted of 38 performers, including twenty ballet girls, in what was billed as "absolutely the largest and most costly enterprise that has yet toured Australia" (NM: 15 June 1911, 1). The show also included its own orchestra. Transport was by rail and steamer. The tent required several days to erect and pull down, and is known to have caused much public interest due to its enormous size.

Opening in Mudgee (NSW) on the 14th of November 1910, the tour then visited Bathurst, and several Western Sydney towns before its Sydney season, where the company played to capacity business for some 47 nights over the Christmas/Summer period. It then continued through NSW prior to the Queensland tour. It is believed that there were several changes in the cast for the Queensland leg, although Vicki Miller continued to play the lead in Bo-Peep. The Sydney company included Richard Hardy, Lizzie Jamieson, Dot Ireland, Ruby Davies, and Miller.

During The Circus Queen James Kay performed the Shaun Treuss dance as a special attraction.

- **Direction:** Stanley McKay; **Producer:** Harry Clay; **Business Manager:** Jimmy Boyle; **Tour Manager:** Walter V. Hobbs
- **Libretto:** Written by Harry Taylor (who also wrote The Modern Bluebeard, performed at the Standard Theatre (Syd) in 1909).
- **Scenery:** Harry Whaite. There were five scenes in the Bo-Peep production:

1. The Witch's Haunt; 2. The Home of Widow Bumpkin; 3. The Palace of the Shah; 4. The Enchanted Castle
5. Under the Waves (a transformation scene)

- **Costumes:** Zenda
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 2/- and 3/- (reserved). Saturday matinee: 1/- and 6d (children)
- **Cast:** includes -

Vicky Miller (Bo-Peep)
 Esmee McLennon (Jack Straw, the widow's son and lover of Bo-Peep)
 Lily Harvey (Simple Simon)
 Bruce Drysdale (Belinda Bumpkin, a merry widow)
 Phyllis Faye (Dinazaidee)
 James Kay (Shah of Persia)
 Ella Miller (Hassan, grand vizier to the Shah)
 Edith Kays-Price (Britannia)
 Daisy Nash (Syb, Queen of the Fairies)
 R. Orton (Fly-by-Night, a witch)

- **Productions are:** Little Bo-Peep (pantomime), The Carnival Girls (2 Act musical comedy), The Circus Queen (3 Act musical comedy).

* **Known tour dates:**

Qld:	Charters Towers	19 Jun	-	24 Jun	(Cnr Mary and Mosman Sts)
	Townsville ~				
	Cairns +	10 Jul	-	15 Jul	(Cnr Abbott and Shields Sts, opposite Post Office)
	Chillagoe				
	Irvinebank				
	Mackay	2 Aug	-	5 Aug	(Wood Street, near Post Office)

NOTE: ~ Townsville season confirmed in the Aug 2 edition of the Daily Mercury (Mackay), although dates and location have not as yet been located.
 + Cairns season was held during the towns Carnival Week
 - No Maryborough season found.

QUOTATIONS and REVIEWS

Charters Tower: For grandeur, spectacular effect, extravagant dressing and finish, Bo-Peep may easily be considered the biggest production we have witnessed. The scenery of which there are five settings is mounted on an elaborate scale. The dressing is spoken of as superb. The pantomime is constructed on very agreeable lines, an interesting romance is interwoven with humorous situations that kept the vast audience in a state of intense amusement from rise to fall of the curtain (Sydney Morning Herald, qtd in Northern Miner 19 June 1911, 4)

Mackay: Bo Peep is one of the most gorgeous and most spectacular theatrical events yet presented. The dressing may be described as superbly rich. The scenery especially painted by Mr Harry Whaite provided a revelation to seasoned connoisseurs (Sydney Sun, qtd in Daily Mercury 2 Aug. 1911, 8).

Mackay: The Circus Queen is certainly all that the preliminary remarks claimed of it. There is a ripple of laughter, a packet of surprises, a conglomeration of intense humour; brilliant musical and vocal numbers right through the performance (Sydney Sun, qtd in Daily Mercury 5 Aug. 1911, 8).

n Miner

POST AS A NEWSPAPER.

1911. PRICE: ONE PENNY.

PANTOMIME -- PANTOMIME.

To-night || COMMENCING . || To-night
 (MONDAY, JUNE 19th.)

Direction of HARRY CLAY.
 THE MAMMOTH MOVING THEATRE.

THE GORGEOUS PANTOMIME--

BO-PEEP !
 BO-PEEP !
 BO-PEEP !
 PRODUCED IN ITS ENTIRETY AND GLORIOUS SPLENDOUR
 BY STANLEY McKAY.

BO - P E E P .

BO-PEEP !
 BO-PEEP !
 BO-PEEP !

38 Star Artists. 38

The Most Colossal and Most Costly Theatrical Enterprise yet
 Presented to Theatre-goers.
 RICHLY SUPERB DRESSING !
 BEAUTIFUL BALLET GIRLS !
 EXQUISITE SCENERY !

"UNDER THE WAVES Including the wonder- "UNDER THE WAVES !"
 "UNDER THE WAVES ful Transformation "UNDER THE WAVES !"

General Notices.	Dividend.
SALVATION ARMY HALL. TO-NIGHT ! TO-NIGHT !	NORTH QUEENSLAND MOTORS, LIMITED. IN LIQUIDATION. DIVIDEND (SEE THEATRE PROGRAMME)

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Charters Towers: (Northern Miner 19 June 1911, 1)

1912

HARRY CLAY'S COMPANY

The advertising promoted the fact that "a great change in the personnel of the company" had been made, with many performers appearing on the tour for the first time.

- **Tour Manager:** Jimmy Boyle; **Music Director:** T.W. Rhodes; **Operator:** Les Cannis
- **Admission prices:** Res 1/6; 1/- ; 6d (children). Saturday matinee 6d; 3d (children)
Note: Cairns admission price was 2/-, 1/- and 6d extra for reserved seats.
- **Artists:**
 - # Essie Clay
 - Harry Clay (interlocutor/tenor/IS)
 - # Rosie Coleman (acrobatic serio) a.k.a. Jolly Coleman
 - # Ern Delavale and Will Gilbert (comics)
 - Wally Edwards (baritone)
 - θ Arthur Elliot (acrobatic comedian), Little Arthur Elliot (child acrobat), Violet Elliot (serio)
 - θ Maud Fanning (coon impersonator)
 - # Maud Florence (soubrette)
 - # Frank Martin (comic)
 - # The Martins [Victor and Maud] (comic jugglers)
 - θ Harry Sadler (comic/singer)
 - George Scott
 - θ Nellie Searle (motto song singer)
 - θ Ethel Smith (singer/step dance)
 - # Maud Stewart (character artist)
 - # Will Toohey (and his dog)
 - θ Joe Verne (coon singer/dancer)
 - Lily Vockler (singer/IS)

NOTE: Delavale and Gilbert, Verne and Smith, and Arthur Elliot and Little Arthur touring as partners.

- **Illustrated Songs:** Gaumont machine "manipulated" by Leo Cannes.
- **Farces:** Incl. The Ball is Going On, Dr Cutemup, Dr Quack, Irish Justice.
- **Films:** Projection unit is the Gaumont machine.
- **Known dates:**

Qld:	Toowoomba	9 Mar	-	16 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	18 Mar	-	20 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	21 Mar	-	25 Mar	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	26 Mar	-	28 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	6 Apr	-	16 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Mackay ~	23 Apr	-	27 Apr	(Druid's Hall)
	Townsville	29 Apr	-	4 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Charters Towers	6 May	-	11 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Cairns	14 May	-	18 May	(Lyric Theatre)
	Chillagoe	20 May	-	22 May	
	Irvinebank	23 May	-	24 May	
	Mareeba	25 May, 27 May			
	Herberton	28 May	-	29 May	
	Atherton	30 May	-	31 May	
	Rockhampton	6 Jul	-	9 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	10 Jul	-	11 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Maryborough	17 Jul	-	18 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	19 Jul	-	20 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	24 Jul	-	26 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	27 Jul	-	30 Jul	(Town Hall)

NOTE: ~ The company canceled its opening night due to their late arrival in Mackay on the Wyandra.

+ The dates between Chillagoe and Atherton represent the Cairns district hinterland itinerary (information sourced from CP: 17 May 1912, 4).

1913

HARRY CLAY'S VAUDEVILLE COMPANY

The Theatre reported that this was the 14th annual tour of Queensland. Harry Clay accompanied the tour as far as Bathurst before returning to oversee the construction of the Newtown Bridge Theatre.

- **Manager:** Jack Campbell; **Advance Rep:** George Reynolds; **Operator:** Les Cannis; **Music Director/Pianist:** Clare Walford; **Stage Manager:** Wally Edwards
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - # May Allen (musician) Also referred to as May Campbell (?)
 - Joy Beromont (serio/dancer)
 - Ivy Bowman (patter artist/comic)
 - Billy Cass (patter artist/comic)
 - Wally Edwards (baritone/interlocutor)
 - Muriel Eskbank (contralto)
 - # Ida Jarvis (serio/comic)
 - Ward Lear (comic/mimic/impersonations, including Chinese)
 - Harry Little (tenor)
 - # Lyall Sisters [Dora and Mazie] (specialty artist)
 - The Martin Sisters [Doris and Phyllis]
 - # Roy Rene (comic and impersonator, a la Julian Rose)
 - # Ada Sadler (contralto)
 - # Shipp and Gaffney [Les Shipp and Jim Gaffney] comics and dancers]
 - Pearl Smaile (specialty artist/acrobatics/singer/dancer/contortion)
 - Gus Stratton (Scottish comedian)
 - Ted Tutty (comic)
 - # Dan Weldon (baritone)
- **Farces:** Incl. School, Oysters a Bob a Bucket, The Indian, The Coming Man.

• **Known dates:**

NSW:	Lithgow	22 Feb	-	
	Bathurst			
Qld:	Toowoomba	22 Mar	- 29 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	31 Mar	- 2 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	3 Apr	- 7 Apr	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	8 Apr	- 10 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	19 Apr	- 29 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	30 Apr-		(School of Arts)
	Mackay	6 May	- 10 May	(Star Theatre)
	Townsville ~	12 May	- 20 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Ayr	22 May	- 23 May	(Delta Theatre)
	Charters Towers	24 May	- 2 Jun	(Theatre Royal)
	Hughenden	4 Jun	- 6 Jun	
	Richmond	9 Jun		
	Friezland	11 Jun		
	Cloncurry	12 Jun	- 14 Jun	
	Nelson	17 Jun	- 18 Jun	
	Cairns	19 Jun	- 24 Jun	(Hibernian Hall)
	Mt Chambers	3 Jul		
	Rockhampton	5 Jul	- 9 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	10 Jul	- 12 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Maryborough	21 Jul	- 22 Jul	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	23 Jul	- 24 Jul	(Theatre Royal)
	Toowoomba	31 Jul	-	(Theatre Royal)
	Dalby	4 Aug		

NOTE: ~ Children from the Townsville Orphanage were guests of the company for the Saturday children's matinee (TDB: 17 May 1913, 3).

DOCH (1911-12).
A. HAROLD CRAXTON (Accompanist).

10/6. Box Plan at Nicholson's.

perhaps to-morrow.—

R SELECTIONS.

Editor).

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TOWN HALL. TOWN HALL.

FOR THREE NIGHTS ONLY.
commencing:

TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT.

HARRY (CLAY'S) HARRY NEW (VAUDEVILLE) NEW COMBINATION.

NEW ARTISTS WITH NEW ACTS.

LESLIE (SHIPP & GAFFNEY) JIM
Comedians and Expert Dancers.

MISS ADA SADLER,
A Songstress of High Quality.

MR. ROY RENE,
Comedian and Impersonator.

MISS IDA JARVIS,
A Popular Comedienne.

MR. WARD LEAR,
The Most Versatile Comedian in the
Business.

MISS MAZIE LYALL,
A Lively Little Lady.

MR. DAN WELDON,
A Fine Baritone.

MISS DORA LYALL,
The Petite Speciality Artist.

MR. WALLY EDWARDS,
An Old-established Favorite.

MISS RENE CAMPBELL,
The Brilliant Musician.

AND OTHERS.

ADMISSION AS USUAL.

Pit, Gd.: Stalls, 1/; Dress Circle and
Reserved Stalls, 1/ extra

Further particulars see day bills, etc.

1914

HARRY CLAY'S COMPANY

- **Manager:** Wally Edwards; **Advance Rep:** George Reynolds; **Musical Director:** Percy Davis; **Operator:** Les Cannis
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - Essie Clay (contralto/dancer)
 - Percy Davis (pianist)
 - # Lulu Eugene
 - Harry Little (tenor)
 - # The Two Kays (cyclists billed as the "kings of the wheel")
 - Max Martin (comic/dancer)
 - # Billy Maloney (billed as the "Man in the Red Velvet Suit")
 - George Pagden ("sixteen stone of comedy"/negro comic)
 - Lillian Rockley (soubrette/singer/dancer)
 - Wal Rockley (comic/ragtime singer)
 - Joe Rox (comic) returns after 8 year absence
 - Kitty Stanley (balladist)
 - Three Starrs [Stella, Rita and Vera] (serios/dancers)

NOTE: Sketch partners on tour were Pagden and Stanley; and Lillie and Will Rockley.

- * **Farces:** Incl. Mr Johnny Come Lately.
- * **Specialty entertainment:** Demonstrations of the Tango.
- * **Known dates:**

Qld:	Toowoomba ~	14 Mar	-	21 Mar	(Town Hall/Elite Picture Gardens)
	Ipswich	23 Mar	-	25 Mar	(Martoo's Olympia Theatre)
	Gympie	26 Mar	-	30 Mar	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	31 Mar	-	2 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	11 Apr	-	20 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	21 Apr-			(School of Arts)
	Mackay	28 Apr	-	2 May	(Star Theatre)
	Townsville	4 May	-	9 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Charters Towers	11 May	-	18 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	20, 22 Jun			(Town Hall)
	Gympie	29 Jun	-	30 Jun	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	22 July			
	Toowoomba	25 July	-	27 Jul	(Town Hall)

NOTE: ~ The company moved to the Elite Picture Gardens (Toowoomba) for St Patrick's Night (17th March), due to the Town Hall having been previously booked.

- No return season in Rockhampton, possibly due to Show Week.
- No Cairns season found.

Mayor (the Hon. A. G. ...
M.L.C.).

Place: School Hall, East-street.
No charge for admission. Collection.
The Lecture announced for BLACK-
STONE will be given on MONDAY,
July 20th. 833

ENTERTAINMENTS.

MARTOO'S OLYMPIA

WEDNESDAY NEXT, JULY 22.

ONE NIGHT ONLY.

Harry (Clay's) Harry
COMPANY.

WITH NEW ARTISTS.

LOOK out for the (2) KAYS (2).
The Kings of the Wheel. Also
THE MAN IN THE VELVET SUIT,
and many others.

LOOK OUT FOR STREET BIKE
PARADE.

Further particulars see Day Bills, &c.

USUAL POPULAR PRICES. 813

MEETINGS.

ROBERTSON FEDERAL ELECTION.

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1915

HARRY CLAY'S COMPANY

- **Manager:** Wally Edwards; **Music Director/Pianist:** Will Hunton
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children) Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:** Bert Corrie (patriotic singer/specialty artist)
 The Eclair Brothers [Will and ?] (specialty act/acrobatics/strength/balancing etc)
 Muriel Eskbank (contralto)
 Arthur Farrell (dancer)
 The Phillip Sisters [Eileen and Bessie] (duetists/singers)
 Amy Rochelle (mezzo soprano/operatic ballads)
 Joe Rox
 Arthur Tauchert
 Lyla Thompson (serio/balladist)
 Ted Tutty

The four cornermen were: Arthur Farrell, Joe Rox, Arthur Tauchert, and Ted Tutty.

- **Known dates:**

Qld:	Toowoomba	3 Apr	-	8 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	9 Apr	-	13 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	14 Apr	-	16 Apr	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	19 Apr	-	21 Apr	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	29 Apr	-	4 May	(School of Arts)
	Mount Morgan	5 May	-	7 May	(School of Arts)
	Mackay	12 May	-	15 May	(Star Theatre)
	Townsville	17 May	-	22 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Charters Towers	27 May	-	29 May	(Theatre Royal)

NOTE: - Again no Cairns season found.
 - No return Rockhampton season found.

TO-NIGHT TO-NIGHT
ENTIRE CHANGE OF PROGRAMME

CLAY'S
WAXWORKS and COMPANY.

**BIGGER, BRIGHTER, BETTER THAN
EVER.**

14 Star Artists 14

**INSTANTANEOUS SUCCESS OF
TIM HEDLEY, "the Musical Moke."**

New Illustrated Songs, "My Sweetheart
from Savannah," "Beneath the Shadow
of the Cross."

**THEATREGRAPH—"In Search of Ad-
venture," and "The Haunted House,"**

1s. ADMISSION 1s.

Children under 10 Half-Price, 14

Public Notice.

ALL the Business People of Gympie
have consented to close their Estab-

1916

HARRY CLAY'S COMPANY

Also promoted as Harry Clay's New Costume Company. The company's advertising invariably said: "Laughter is the Best Medicine. Toowoombaites [or whatever town being played] Come and Get Your Medicine." Also advertised as the 17th annual season.

- **Manager:** Wally Edwards; **Advance Rep:** Mark Higgins; **Music Director/Pianist:** Madame Levarto (billed as the female Paderewski)
- **Admission prices:** 1/- ; 6d (children). Saturday matinee: 6d; 3d (children)
- **Artists:**
 - Peter Brooks (tenor)
 - Ern Delavale
 - Louie Duggan (the "Devonshire Nightingale")
 - Will Gilbert
 - Ward Lear (versatile artist)
 - Phil. Levarto (the man of many acts/juggler)
 - The Phillip Sisters
 - Will Rollow (eccentric comedian)
 - Lily Vockler (a popular 'ginger')
- **Farces:** Incl. Military Tactics.
- **Known dates:**

Qld:	Rockhampton	22 Apr	-	26 Apr + 29 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	27 Apr	-	28 Apr	(School of Arts)
	Mackay	2 May	-	6 May	(Star Theatre)
	Charters Towers	13 May	-	17 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Townsville	19 May	-	25 May	(Theatre Royal)
	Alligator Creek ~	26 May			
	Maryborough	6 Jun	-	8 Jun	(Town Hall)
	Gympie	9 Jun	-	13 Jun	(Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	14 Jun	-	16 Jun	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	17 Jun	-	20 Jun	(Town Hall)

NOTE: ~ Visitors could secure a return fare on the Majenta for 2/-. The boat left the Townsville wharf at 4 pm.
 - There is, for the first time, no Toowoomba season on the first leg of the tour.
 - No Rockhampton return visit found.

1917

HARRY CLAY'S MUSICAL REVUE AND VAUDEVILLE COMPANY

The tour was occasionally advertised as just "Harry Clay." The programme also changed with this tour, disposing of the minstrel first half in favour of a first half revusical. The admission price also rose for the first time in some of the far northern towns. These charges were generally 2/2 and 1/1 + Tax. Matinees stayed the same at 6d (Adults) and 3d (children).

- **Business Manager:** Wally Edwards; **Tour Manager:** Art Slavin

- **Artists:** James Caldwell
Ivy Darrell (musical act)
Bert Desmond (parody and patter)
Matti Jansen (parody and patter)
Max Martin (eccentric dancing)
Ida Merton (singer)
Phillip Sisters [Bessie and Eileen]
Art Slavin
Lily Thompson
Redhead Wilson (acrobatics/patter)

NOTE: - Partnerships on tour were Desmond and Jansen, Slavin and Thompson and the Phillip Sisters.
- There is also a reference to Wallo and Cliffo being on the tour at some stage, although this is yet to be confirmed.

- **Revusicals/Farces:** include - School, Fooling the Farmer, Insurance (farce), Dockum Street, Woolloomooloo (revue), The Count of Brazil (revue), Why Don't You Marry The Girl (revue), Baby (farce).

- **Known dates are:**

NSW:	Maitland	18 Apr-		
	Gunnedah	? Apr	-	? Apr
	Moree	? Apr	-	?
Qld:	Gympie	7 May	-	8 May (Olympia Theatre)
	Rockhampton	16 May	-	19 May (School of Arts)
	Mackay ~	21 May	-	26 May (Star Theatre)
	Charters Towers	2 Jun	-	7 Jun (Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	25 Jun	-	27 Jun (Theatre Royal)
	Ipswich	29 Jun	-	(Town Hall)
	Toowoomba	30 Jun	-	2 Jul (Town Hall)

NOTE: ~ Mackay Carnival Week.

a diversified entertainment, comprising a huge apparatus. In Brisbane recently he completed a wonderful magic. You should not miss this and cleverest magic that has ever come to

**TOWN HALL TOOWOOMBA.
THE EVENT OF THE YEAR.
TO-NIGHT AND MONDAY,
HARRY CLAY'S COMPANY.**

Mr. Harry Clay has in the past seen many companies to your town, but he has no hesitation in proclaiming this the **GREATEST OF ALL.**

**A GRAND DOUBLE BILL.
MUSICAL COMEDY and VAUDEVILLE**

An Entertainment full of sparkle and life. The opening production will be—

'DOCKUM ST., WOOLLOOMOOLOO.'

A clever satire on Sydney Street Life introducing topical numbers and clever witticisms.

16 — STAR ARTISTS — 16.

REDHEAD WILSON.—A Novelty Act in which clever tumbling is interspersed with bright fooling.

**THE PHILLIP SISTERS, JAMES CALDWELL, SLAVIN and THOMPSON
MAX MARTIN, DESMOND and JANSEN.**

It's the Greatest Show Travelling.
PRICES: 6d., 1/ and 2/.

Box Plan at Nicholson's.

754 **WALLY EDWARDS, Manager.**

**GRAND
EUCHRE TOURNAMENT
AND DANCE.**

(IN AID OF A.N.A. MEMBERS ON
ACTIVE SERVICE.)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT NEXT

MASONIC HALL

**HAIRDRESS
BUSSE
FIRST-CLASS
Tele**

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HARRY CLAY'S MUSICAL REVUE AND VAUDEVILLE COMPANY

Advertisements in the TDB: indicate that this was the company's 21st annual visit (to Townsville at least). The reasoning behind these statements is unknown to date.

- **Business Manager:** Wally Edwards; **Tour Manager:** Art Slavin; **Music Director/Pianist:** Mary Chesney.
- **Admission prices:** Advertised as "popular prices." In the southern Queensland centres the prices were 1/- and 1/6 for reserved seats.
- **Artists:**
 - Lalla Brooke (quick change impersonations)
 - Clyde Cameron (tenor)
 - George Crotty (American revue artist)
 - The Four Kings [Marie,] (female acrobats)
 - Ida Jarvis (soubrette)
 - Wal Rockley
 - Art Slavin
 - Lily Thompson
- **Revusicals:** Incl. Casey's Ashes (by Art Slavin), Oh That Hat, Thirty Thousand Miles a Minute.
- **Farces:** Incl. The Lunatic Asylum.

- **Known dates:**

NSW:	Inverell	? May	-	? May	
	Gunnedah	13 May	-	14 May	
	Werris Creek	15 May			
Qld:	Warwick	16 May	-	17 May	
	Toowoomba	18 May	-	21 May	(Town Hall)
	Ipswich	22 May			(Town Hall)
	Gympie	23 May	-	24 May	(Olympia Theatre)
	Howard	27 May			
	Maryborough	28 May	-	30 May	(Town Hall)
	Mackay	14 Jun	-		
	Townsville ~	17 Jun	-		
	Charters Towers	25 Jun	-	28 Jun	(Theatre Royal)
	Rockhampton	10 Jul	-	11 Jul	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	12 Jul			(School of Arts)

- * NOTE: ~ Final night of Townsville season unknown due to incomplete issues of TDB:
 - The tour opens at Inverell (the length of season or exact dates unknown).

1927

CLAY'S THEATRES LTD

Advertised as both "Clay's Theatre's Ltd" and "Clay's Vaudeville Company" the tour was promoted as both "The Big Show at Small Prices, and "A Joyous Feast of Fun." Some advertisements also promoted the company as: "Presenting Their Musical Comedies, headed by Nellie Kolle, who will perform her latest chorus song successes." The Pre-tour reports refer to the fact that "quite a number of years have gone by since the late Harry Clay sent a company."

- **Admission prices:** 4/4, 3/3, 2/- and 1/-
- **Artists:**
 - The Atlanta Girls (singers/dancers/contortionists/acrobats)
 - Billy the Boy Wonder (ventriloquist, with his doll "Smiler"/comic/patter/singer)
 - Sydney Clarke (dancing violinist)
 - Clay's Jazzy Jazz Band
 - Lily Coburn (soubrette)
 - Chun Lin Foo (Chinese magician/escapologist)
 - George Hathaway (comic)
 - Julian (French comic/cartoon artist billed as the "Komedie Cartoonist")
 - Nellie Kolle (headline act, singer/pianist/male impersonator)
 - Bessie Lester (American comic)
 - Mabel Morgan (soprano)
 - The Weatherley Trio (sisters billed as the "boneless wonders")

NOTE: Chun Lin Foo, Mabel Morgan and Bessie Lester are promoted for the Maryborough season. It is not yet known whether they accompanied the whole tour or just part of it.

- **Known dates:**

Qld:	Toowoomba	18 Mar	-	19 Mar	(Town Hall)
	Rockhampton	27 Apr	-	28 Apr + 30th	(School of Arts)
	Mt Morgan	29 Apr			(School of Arts)
	Finch Hatton	4 May			
	Mackay	5 May	-	7 May	(Star Theatre)
	Charters Towers	23 Jun	-	25 June	(Theatre Royal)
	Maryborough	21 Jul	-	22 Jul	(Town Hall)

NOTE: - No Gympie dates found for first leg.
 - No Townsville dates found, possibly because there are quite a number of missing issues in the Daily Bulletin during May.

E STRAND THEATRE

Matinee To-day, 2.30, To-night and To-morrow.

—PRESENTING—

"THE RANGER OF THE BIG PINES."

WITH

KENNETH HARLAN AND HELENE COSTELLO,

—IN A PICTURE—

WHERE SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAINS STAND ALOOF FROM THE PETTY WARFARE OF MEN.

—ALSO—

"THE LITTLE FIREBRAND"

WITH EDITH THORNTON.

A COMEDY DRAMA WITH PLEASANT MEMORIES.

Comedy—"Wall Street Blues." Pathe and Australian Gazettes.

BOX PLAN AT PALING'S, or after 7 p.m. Strand—Phone 1059.

DON'T FORGET—"MADEMOISELLE FROM ARMENTIERES,"—
STRAND, MONDAY, MARCH 21st, 22nd AND 23rd. PRICES, 3/, 2/, & 1/.

TOWN HALL.

TOWN HALL.

FRIDAY 18, SATURDAY, 19 MARCH.

MATINEE—SATURDAY, AT 2.30.

CLAY'S THEATRES, LTD.,

PRESENTING THEIR

Musical Comedies, headed by Miss Nellie Kelle,

PRESENTING HER LATEST CHORUS SONG SUCCESSES.

JULIAN,

BILLY, THE WONDER BOY,

Komedy Kartoonist (Direct from Paris) Australia's Most Versatile Performer.

CLAY'S JAZZY JAZZ BAND,

THE MIRTH AND MELODY MAKERS.

GEO. HATHAWAY,

SYDNEY CLARKE,

The Dancing Violinist.

The somewhat Different Comedian.

LILY COBURN,

THE ATLANTA GIRLS,

The Dainty Soubrette.

In Clever Songs and Dances.

THE WEATHERLEY TRIO.—THE BONELESS WONDERS.

A JOYOUS FEAST OF FUN. A JOYOUS FEAST OF FUN.

PRICES: 2/ and 1/.—THE BIG SHOW AT SMALL PRICES.

MATINEE—CHILDREN CAN SEE IT FOR 6d

ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATIONS, TO-DAY, THURSDAY, 17th MARCH

Procession 10.30 a.m. from James-street (opp. St. Patrick's Church), via Neil, Lawrence, Ruthven, Russell and West streets, to Holy Name Grounds.

Sports, including Horse and Motor events, and Tug-of-war, Holy Name grounds. Admission 1/, school children free.

Grand Irish National Concert, Town Hall, commencing 8 p.m. Specially selected artists. Admission 3/, 2/ and 1/. Reserved 1/ extra. Children half-price.

925

P. S. CARROLL, Secretary.

The

NEW S GO

FROCKS

Ladies' Taffeta E
Early Victorian
shades

Maids' Dainty C
Frocks, with s
with gold lace a

Beautiful Crepe D
the newest style

Maids' Crepe De C
sleeves and cc

Ladies' Crepe De C
with the newest
pleated skirt .

Ladies' Stone Mar

Ladies' Blue Goat

Plum Shot Rain
wearing quality

24in. Ready-made C
nine eyelets in each
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A Special Offer.—No

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Toowoomba: (Toowoomba Chronicle 17 Mar. 1927, 7)

1929

MO'S MERRYMAKERS

The tour began within days of Roy Rene's and Sadie Gale's marriage. The company was known in Sydney as The Merry Monarchs, although this is not advertised in the Queensland tour's promotion. As Chapter Five notes, the tour is believed to have been underwritten by Clay's, although there is no mention of this in any advertising or reviews of the tour. In Rockhampton and Townsville the seasons are recorded as having been presented by Vaude and Verne, who are known to have been the lessees of both theatres. The itinerary is also thought to have included only the far northern centres of the state.

- **Music Director:** Arthur Rodney
- **Admission prices:** 4/-; 3/-; 2/-
- **Artists:**
 - Binns and Alma (sketch artists and specialty act)
 - Billy Bovis (comic)
 - Clyde and Yvette (novelty dancers)
 - Stella Collier (soprano)
 - Sadie Gale
 - The Four Rainbows (soubrettes/dancers)
 - Roy Rene
 - Robert Raymond (baritone)
- **Known dates:**

Rockhampton	21 Sept	-	12 Oct	(Coliseum)
Mt Morgan	14 Oct	-		(School of Arts)
Townsville	18 Oct	-	24 Oct	(Theatre Royal)

AMUSEMENTS.

TIVOLI AND ARCADIA.

Directions:
Tivoli And Arcadia Theatres,
COMMENCING TO-MORROW
GEORGE ALEXANDER and OSSIE
OSWALDA in a farcical comedy of
love, jam and dentistry.

FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

A hundred laughs in this comedy
of light comedies.

Also—NENIA DESNI—in

Nobody's Children.

She was a lonely wife, a child of
the Revolution, but how she won
through, reached fame as an actress
and found her father, will touch
your heart.

TOPICAL—SCENIC—&c.

TO-NIGHT—LAST NIGHT.

The mother-love war story,

"MUMSIE."

AND BILLY SULLIVAN in

"THE GALLANT FOOL."

JUST LOOK! SATURDAY,

12—STAR ARTISTS—12

In a comedy of Hollywood.

"SHOW PEOPLE."

And CLARA BOW in

THE PRIMROSE PATH.

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SATURDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER,

1929.

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ing Class at Mrs. Miller's Residence, 48
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Busby; 2nd, 280—R. G. Watson; 3rd,
126, Master P. Boyle. S. H. NEATON,
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AL WILSON, the Ace of Stunt Flyers,

**"THE CLOUD
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A tremendous drama woven around
Wilson's acrobats. There are fights in
the sky, changing from plane to plane,
and there is a wedding in the heavens.

MADGE KENNEDY in—

"OH BABY."

What a rip-roaring comedy. Oh Baby,
what situations. Little Billy, the tough
fight manager, impersonating a young
girl and the Aunt falling for the decep-
tion.

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(A Western Drama.)

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Gent's Bicycle £4/10/-. Violin Outfits
from 45/-. Hall Stands 45/-. 50/-. and
60/-. each. Box Ice Chests 45/-. and 65/-.
each, practically new D.H. Singer
Machine £10/10/-. Accordions 20/-. 30/-.
and 40/-. each. Austrian Rocker 30/-.
Half Plate T.P. Camera with 3 slides,
Back Lens and other accessories £1, and
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1. ADMISSION PRICES

The price of admission over the first 18 years of touring varied rarely, being 1 shilling and 6d for children under ten. From 1917 the price was adjusted to 2 shillings for reserved front and circle, seats, and for some of the more distant centres in the far north. The following comparison with other entertainment shows touring Queensland prior to and during that period of Clay's association with that state indicates the different pricing policies.

1888

- St George's Minstrels: 2/- (dress circle); 1/- (stalls); 6d (pit).

1893

- D'Ensem-Doyle Company: 4/-; 3/- and 2/-
- Walter Bentley Qld "Hamlet" tour: 5/-;4/-;2/-;6d
- Empire Minstrel and Specialty Co: Dr Circle 2/-; Stalls 1/-; Pit 6d

1894

- Grand Minstrel and Variety Entertainment (Townsville Amateur Minstrels): 3/-; 2/-; 1/-
- Slade Murray's Oxford Company: 3/-; 2/-; 1/-

1895

- Blind Jubilee Singers: Res Seats 3/-; Front Seats 2/6; Back Seats 1/-
- Black Diamond Minstrel and Variety Co: (Amateur Minstrels) 3/-; 2/-; 1/-
- Coghill Bros New Minstrels: 3/-; 2/-; 1/-

1896

- Delohery, Craydon and Holland: 3/-; 2/-; 1/-
- Alfred Dampier Co: 3/-; 2/-; 1/-
- Harry Rickards New Tivoli Specialty Co: Res Seats 4/-; 3/-;2/-;1/-

1900

- Genuine Georgia Minstrels and Original Alabama Cake Walkers: 4/-; 3/-; Pit 2/-
- Bell's Waxworks, Boer war and London Vaudeville Co (with Harry Clay): 1/- and 6d (Child)

1901

- Percy St. Johns Royal Burlesque Specialty Co: 3/-; 2/-; 1/-
- Hawtry Comedy Co: Res Seats 5/-; Stalls 3/-; Pit 1/-
- Pollards Opera Co: Res Seats 4/-; Stalls 2/6; Pit 1/-

1902

- The World's Entertainers - Polite Vaudeville: 4/-; 2/6; 1/-

1903

- I. Cole's Limelight and Variety Entertainment: 1/-; 6d

1904

- Ted Holland's New Vaudeville Enterprises: Front Seats 2/-; Back Seats 1/-
- American Comedy Co: 4/-; 2/6; 1/-

1905

- Fiske Jubilee Singers: 3/-, 2/-, 1/- (children under ten half price to front and stalls)
- Richards' Entertainers: 2/-, 1/-, children half price.

1906

- Richards' Entertainers: 2/-; 1/-

1908

- J.C. Williamson's New Dramatic Co (touring Brewster's Millions): 5/-; 3/-; 1/-
- Webber's Pictures and Vaudeville Entertainers: 2/-; 1/-

1911

- D.B. O'Connor Opera Co: 4/-; 2/6; 1/-

1913

- Birch, Carroll and Coyle (pictures and vaudeville): 1/-; 6d

1916

- D. B. O'Connor's Comic Opera Co: 4/-; 2/6; 1/-

1917

- Hugh Huxham's Serenaders: 3/-; 2/-; 1/-

2. AUDIENCES

Country touring was quite naturally a different environment altogether from that of city based shows. In her 1994 Ph D dissertation "Australian Travelling Theatre 1890-1935: A Study in Popular Entertainment and National Ideology" (1994), Barbara Garlick focuses on several travelling theatre companies during the late 1800s and early 1900s. She writes:

A consideration of Australian travelling theatre in the period... collapses the idea of both a class-targeted audience and a class-targeted repertoire. While the city seasons of the companies may have permitted the applicability of both demarcations... leaving the main line resulted in audiences who were defined primarily by their geographical location; under these conditions the repertoire ceased to have any overt class value, which was superseded by a more fundamentally important value, that of entertainment.... We have then, at this period a geographically diverse society in often isolated areas, united within those areas not by class so much as by common geographical or by national/patriotic concerns (254-256).

A review in Townsville's Daily Bulletin suggests, however, that by 1914 (in that in that town at least), some differentiation was being indicated by the local audiences with regard to the different entertainments on offer:

Some companies which come to Townsville appeal to a particular section of the community, and get either a good downstairs or a good upstairs house, but Harry Clay's company somehow seems to suit all classes and they get a good house in all parts (5 May, 1914, 4).

Harry Clay's tours, as with the ideology behind the minstrel show, were fundamentally entertainment based. His programmes generally catered for all classes on these tours, as opposed to the working class audiences who supported his Sydney and suburban circuits. The role of his touring company was not simply to provide comic, visual or aural entertainment for the general pleasure of his audiences, however. More than this he strove to create a rapport with them, incorporating local, as well as national issues into the programmes. The reason for this being simply a financial and business philosophy which Clay saw as presenting him with the opportunity to return annually to each town with the support of the locals, and not as Albert Goldie indicates, as a species of spieler attempting to take money out of a town (TT: June 1917, 10). In this department the comics he toured were very much involved in a form of bonding, forming an alliance with the audiences rather than distancing them. The use of patriotic and sentimental songs (perhaps the most popular types of song during the period) were often performed as illustrated songs, along with Irish themes, and turns or songs about everyday heroes. These were often ordinary folk like the fireman or the young soldier. All contributed to providing for the sensibilities of the country audiences.

As to the behaviour of the audiences, it is difficult to know. Reviews of Clay's shows or those of others during the same period, seldom account for their behaviour apart from the persistent calls for encores, or their vocal appreciation. It seems that perhaps, the "wild and woolly" behaviour of the Sydney audiences (as described in Chapter Three) was not a familiar occurrence within country theatres of Queensland.

Another aspect to country touring, and which has not yet been the subject of investigation, is the differences in nightly attendance - that is, the occurrence of "dead nights." For example, the Toowoomba Chronicle in 1908, indicates that Friday's in that town were "bad for theatrical entertainments" (31 Oct. 1908, 3), while the Bundaberg Mail in 1905 notes that Saturday nights were "particularly bad for travelling entertainers [attempting] to bid for public patronage" (26 June 1905, 3). In this regard, the general opinion was that Clay's seldom had difficulty filling the venues in these towns on those nights due to their abundant popularity.

3. CHILDREN'S MATINEES

The company would perform children's matinees on Saturday afternoons, usually beginning at around 2-2.15 pm, with admission charges almost always being 3d (children) and 6d for adults. Prizes would be on offer in such categories as:

<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>
Best Dressed Doll	Tug of War
Best Skipping	Best Basket Trick
Best Singing	Best Singing
Best Recitation	
The prizes in 1906 included:	
GIRLS:	Best Dressed Doll (Rolled gold bangle, value 10/6)
	Best Recitation (Ladies dressing case)
	Best Skipping (Rolled gold bangle, value 10/6)
BOYS:	Best Singing (Gents Gun Metal Lever Watch, value 10/6)
	Best Basket Trick (Handsome Penknife, value 5/-)
	Tug of War (6 Handsome Prizes)

4. FARCES AND REVUSICALS

A farce would generally finish each evening's entertainment on tour, and utilise the skills of a number of the company. The 1917 and 1918 tours also saw the company introduce one act musical comedies (revusicals) either as a replacement for the farce or as an additional entertainment.

1901

The Ball's Going On ¹
Where Have I Seen That Face

Little Boy Lost, A
The Felon on the Rocks

Game Of Cards, A

1902

Hurrah for Casey ²

A Lord for the Night

On the Fire

1903

The Mysterious House
Razor Jim
Slattery's Home

An Untamed Savage
The Baby Elephant
Cupid's Artful Dodge

Zic Johnson
The Chinese Servant

1904

The Mysterious House
The Fellow that Looks Like Me
The Coming Man

The Coal-heaver's Revenge
Dr Cutemup

Razor Jim
Johnston's Dead

1905

Two Statues
Zic Johnson
Slocum's Dog

The Sioux Indian
The Coming Man
The Jealous Husband

The Ball is Going On
Hard To Kill

1906

Johnny Come Lately
Laughing Gas
The Sioux Indian

Blow the Trumpet
Bibbs and Dribbs

That Boy Pete
Hurrah for Casey

1907

Loved, Divorced, and Poisoned
The Automations
School

The Lawyer's Clerk
The Wig-makers
Fast and Slow

Dr Slocum's Dog
Rumpus

1908

The Indian Chief
On the Fire
The Theatregraph

Dr Cutemup
The Baby Elephant
Johnny Came Too Late

The Haunted Pawnshop
Love Versus Surgery
Quite Lodgings

1909

The Ball is Going On
Cupid's Artful Dodge

Blow the Trumpet
The Mysterious House

The Clockmaker

¹ Written by Johnny Cowan, and previously performed in Queensland by the Empire Minstrel and Specialty Co in 1893.

² Known to have been performed in 1894 by Slade Murray's Oxford Co.

1910

The Lunatic Asylum
Lizzie
Razor Jim (starring Harry Clay and Ted Tutty)

The Indian (The Silly Indian)
Sizzle
Johnny Come Lightly

The Mysterious House
Bits and Bits
School

1911

The Insurance Agent
The Baby Elephant

Hurrah for Casey

The Lawyer's Clerk

1912

The Ball is Going On
Irish Justice

Dr Cutemup

Dr Quack

1913

Oysters a Bob a Bucket
The School

The Indian

The Coming Man

1914

Irish Justice
Mr Johnny Come Lately

Hurrah for Casey
The Pawnshop

The Midnight Intruder

1915

The Insurance Office
The Secret Agent

A Lord for a Night

Zic Johnson

1916

Military Tactics

1917

Why Don't You Marry The Girl (revue)
Dockum Street, Woolloomooloo (revue)
School (farce)

The Baby (farce)
The Count of Brazil (revue)

Fooling the Farmer (revue)
Insurance (farce)

1918

Casey's Ashes (revue) by Art Slavin
Thirty Thousand Miles A Minute (revue)

Thumbs Up (farce)
The Lunatic Asylum (farce)

Oh that Hat (revue)

5. FILMS

The films were projected through various machines over the years. These were advertised as the latest machines imported from London (or where ever). The images would be "thrown on the sheet," supplied no doubt, by the company, as they most often worked venues which had not been adapted for cinematic screenings.

NOTE: In 1899 Harry Rickards Musical and Comedy Company advertised that the Theatregraph they toured with superseded the Cinematograph and Biograph. "Everything life-size, showing living pictures the full size of the stage..." (NM: 2 Nov. 1899, 1).

1905

Films were screened via the Biopictroscope.

Seven Castles of the Devil (the only known film toured that year)

1906

This tour utilised the Sperantoscope, and advertised the fact that 1500 ft of new Moving Pictures was to be screened nightly. The projector was described as the very latest machine "being driven by a motor [and giving] the best moving picture" (GT: 7 July 1906, 3). Films toured included:

The Grand French Steeplechase
The Life Of An American Fireman
The Water Spout

The Lost Child
Blind Man's Bluff
Love Letters Love Letters

A Five Cent Trolley Ride
Racing Sayings Illustrated

1907

Theatregraph operated by A.T. MacIntyre. Films screened included:

A Detective Chase Around the World
The Hundred Tricks
The Custom House Officers
The Starvelings (depicting the ups and downs of the street Arabs of London)

In Search of an Adventure
The Drunkard's Dream
The Great French Steeplechase

The Haunted House
A Father's Honour
A Tragedy At Sea

1908

Theatregraph operator was Lou Courtney. Films screened included:

Jim's Apprenticeship
Short-sighted Cyclist
The Indian's Revenge (return visits; from London)
The Butterfly Catcher
The Reckless Horseman (from London)

The Cripple Comes A Cropper
The Lone Trapper (return visits) 1500 ft
The Wedding Bells
The Elixir of Strength
The Straw Man

Stop Thief
Catch the Kid
The Angler's Dream

1909

Theatregraph operator was Albert Dettmann. Films screened included:

The Witches Kiss
Her Sweetheart When A Boy
A Kind-hearted Gentleman
The Half-caste's Revenge
A Case of Spirits

William the Poacher
Love Conquers All
Durant Family at the Seaside
Her Sweetheart When A Boy
Gunner Moir and Tiger Smith (English Boxing Championship)

An Affair of Honour
His First Row
Pretty Typist
An Awkward Situation

1910

Lou Courtney again operated the Theatregraph projector. Films toured included:

The Anarchist's Sweetheart
The Hungry Child

The Punchtown Steeplechase
The Lady Doctor's Husband

Sister Angela

1911

Advertised films were:

East Lynne
The Farmer's Daughter
From Fatherhood to Drunkenness

Sister Angela
A Child's Hate

From Shadow to Sunshine
The Gaol Bird

1912

Gaumont machine was operated by Les Cannis. Films were apparently screened, but as yet there is no indication of what they were.

1913 - 1918, 1927, 1929

There were no films advertised or screened during these tours.

6. ILLUSTRATED SONGS

The highlight of the second part of each show and arguably one of the most popular elements of each show during the first decade at least were the illustrated songs. These were songs performed to background scenery, mood visuals created through the use of limelight and slides, and thrown onto a large screen. They were usually sung by the troupe's star performers. They operated through an oxy-ether lantern which flashed the pictures onto the screen. In many instances, venues would have to extinguish all gas equipment while the limelight lanterns were in operation (TC: 18 Mar. 1905, 4). By 1910 it is believed the visuals for the illustrated songs were being screened by the film projector.

- The dissolving effects and the representation of a snow storm were beautiful and realistic. The lantern is of the latest American pattern, and the pictures are thrown on the screen sharply and clearly (MDM: 10 Mar 1904, 2)
- The limelight illustrations in each instance consisted of a first-class series of coloured pictures (GT: 8 Apr. 1905, 3).
- The coloured slides, typically American, are excellent productions and form a realistic accompaniment ([GT: 11 Apr. 1905, 3).
- A feature of particular merit about the performances given by Mr Clay are the picture songs. The music of these is both new and pretty. They are admirably sung, and the manner in which the company's operator, Mr MacIntyre, manipulates the lantern, particularly in the matter of getting the beautiful dissolving effects which he secures, supplies all that is necessary to make these contributions absolutely the best of their kind ever seen on the local stage (NM: 22 May 1905, 7).
- Wally Edwards' 1909 illustrated song "Nailing the Colours to the Mast" was accompanied by pictures of several heroes, and the [audience's] enthusiasm at times made the singer's voice inaudible. Lord Kitchener, Baden-Powell, the Dreadnought, Earl Dudley, and his Majesty the King were cheered vociferously, but the greatest enthusiasm was shown towards the Union Jack and the New South Wales Lancers. Cries of "where is Lord Roberts" were heard from several portions of the hall (TC: 20 July 1909, 3).

7. PROGRAM ORDER

The shows from 1901 to 1916 were generally arranged according to the following plan. The doors open at 7.15/7.30 allowing the audience an opportunity to view the waxworks, look at scenes depicted in the Cosmorama, or operate the penny gaffs, all of which were either in the auditorium or the foyer. Musical selections from the Theatrephone would also entertain the audience as they wandered about and socialised. The variety entertainment would begin at 8 pm. The performance area would be picturesquely and scenically staged, using backdrops, plants, and a variety of visual paraphernalia.

The first part consisted of Minstrelsy, which opened with an overture (performed by the pianist) and then followed by a chorus which would include all the members of the troupe. This would be followed by individual turns, in a form described as the "usual cycle business" (TC: 28 Mar. 1905, 9). The show would be MC'd by the interlocutor (in the early years this would be Harry Clay) who would most often interact with the two endmen, with the cast on stage in a semicircle. The first part is also known to have occasionally finished with a film (or films).

The second part, the olio (which generally began with its own overture), would again consist of individual turns (without all cast members being on stage). The highlight of the second part was often the illustrated songs. If a film or films were not screened at the end of the first part, they would be shown during the second part (usually in the middle).

Each show would end with a farce involving most of the cast. Some farces presented in earlier years would be toured again some years later. As some seasons were naturally shorter in some towns than in others, it is believed that the company would have kept a record of performances, so that those farces not previously presented in a particular centre on an earlier visit could be played at a later date.

On some occasions the show would be followed by a dance.

NOTE: The last evening of a season was known as "favourites night" when the audience could request any item heard during the week. To do so they would put in their request to the manager prior to the start of the show.

The following are some examples of tour programs presented over the years. Generally speaking, the first night performance in one town would also be the same performance given in successive towns. This allowed for the same printed programs to be used for the length of the tour. In each case only the name of the town, the dates and/or the venue needed to be changed.

1901

WEST MAITLAND: West Maitland Town Hall (Mon 18 February)

FIRST PART

T. W Rhodes:	Overture
Cast:	Chorus
H. Clay:	"The English Speaking Race Against the World"
W. Bracey:	"Move On" (nigger song)
K. Henry:	"A Picture of My Best Girl"
Smith Sis:	"Mamie Dooley" (dance)
S. Wilson:	"Too Strong"
E. Clay:	"She Was Happy Till She Met You"
H. Clay:	"Many Happy Returns of the Day"
S. Wilson:	(comic act)

SECOND PART

T.W. Rhodes	(Second Part Overture)
W. Bracey:	"Where Am I Lodging" (song and dance)
E. Clay:	"Do, My Dinah, Do" (song and clog/Indian club dance)
Farce:	(title unknown)

1905

MARYBOROUGH School of Arts (Mon 24 April)

FIRST PART

	T.W. Rhodes:	Overture
	Cast:	Chorus
Song	W. Edwards:	"The Gauntlet"
Song	B. Leyfield:	"Kindly Step This Way" plus step dance
Comedy	T. Tutty:	(comic act plus dances)
Song	K. Henry:	"Mary Green"
Song	C. Sullivan:	"Blue Dell"
Song	N. Gonzales	"Talk Don't Buy Me Nothing" plus acrobatic dance
Comic Song	J. Rox	"Pom Tiddley Pom-Pom" plus eccentric dance
Song	A. Blackie:	"The Best in the Whole Wide World"
Song	H. Edwards:	"Dig Away Dempsey" Irish song plus dance

SECOND PART

	T.W. Rhodes:	(Second Part Overture)
IS	H. Clay:	"In Dear Old Fairy Land"
IS	W. Edwards:	"The Man in the Overalls"
Comedy	T. Tutty:	(songs and dances in the character of an old woman)
Song	N. Gonzales	"The Hottentot" plus eccentric dance
Comedy	H. Edwards	
Song	A. Blackie	"When It's Moonlight on the Silvery Rio Grande"
Comic Song	J. Rox	
Clog Dance	B. Leyfield:	
Song	C. Sullivan:	"Ragged Jack" plus "Goodbye Mr Jackson"
Farce:		(title unknown)

1910

TOOWOOMBA Town Hall (Wed 23 March)

FIRST PART

P. Davis:	Overture
Cast:	Chorus - "March Away"
P. Faye:	"Send Them to Me"
H. Willis:	"Another Little Girl in my Eye"
E. McGuire:	"Society"
B. Drysdale:	"I Don't Know Where They Are"
C. Keating:	"Every Fellow's in Love with a Girl"
B. Corrie:	"There'll Come a Day"
C. Golding:	"Cannibal Love"
L. Thompson:	"Oh! Oh! Johnnie"
S. Kerridge:	"Live and Let Live"
T. Tutty:	"Corned Beef and Cabbage"
E. Capell:	"Vanity Fair"

SECOND PART

P. Davis:	(Second Part Overture)
E. McGuire:	"I Can't Forget My Mother" (IS)
S. Kerridge:	"Dancing Sunshine" (IS)
H. Willis:	(ventriloquial act)
L. Thompson:	(comedy)
Corrie / Golding	(patter)
E. Capell	(Hottentot dance)
B. Drysdale / Faye	(Comedy)
C. Keating	"Harold and a Girl Inside"
Films:	"The Anarchist's Sweetheart" and "The Punctown Steeplechase"
Farce:	"The Lunatic Asylum"

1915

ROCKHAMPTON: School of Arts (Thu 29 April)

FIRST PART

	W. Hunton:	(Overture)
	Cast:	(Chorus)
Song	B. Corrie:	"We're All Under the Same Old Flag"
Song/Dance	A. Farrell:	(ragtime)
Song	M. Eskbank:	"Cairo" (an Egyptian ballad)
C/Songs	L. Thompson:	"Alice, Where Art Thou?" and "Broke Me Basin"
Songs	A. Tauchert:	"Pilgrims of the Night" and "The Polka"
Song	A. Rochelle:	"That's How I Need You"
Songs	J. Rox:	"I'd Better Go Back Again" and "Squirty, The Policeman"
Song/Dance	Phillip Sis:	"Baby Grand"

SECOND PART

	W. Hunton:	(second Part Overture)
Imp/Dance	A. Farrell:	(Jewish impersonations/dance)
Spec. Act	Eclair Bros:	(Hand-balancing/strength act)
Imp	Phillip Sis:	(Coster impersonations)
Song/dance	Corrie and Tauchert:	
Song	A. Rochelle:	"In the Heart of the City"
Song	J. Rox:	"Only Been Married A Week"
Song	L. Thompson:	"Love Me While the Loving Is Good"
Farce:		"Zic Johnston" (with the lead taken by Ted Tutty)

8. SIDESHOW ATTRACTIONS

AUTOMATIC SLOT MACHINES (PENNY GAFFS/PEEP SHOW): These operated by inserting a penny, and provided various entertainments including delineations of one's character. There were also machines which delivered bags of sweets.

THE COSMORAMA: As Chapter Five has already noted [*see page 110*] the Cosmorama was a portable optical picture exhibition. It is believed to have been a box which contained at one end a lens through which a person looked. A tunnel effect, which also provided both a sense of depth and a separate reality, was created through two flanking walls. At the far end was positioned an intricately painted scenic view. Although Cosmorama is the name used, there is reason to believe that Clay's may well have toured a stereoscopic exhibition, which differed in that two pictures and two lenses were used allowing a 3D style effect to be created. That this may have been the case is suggested by several references to "stereoscopic" and "panoramic" views in reviews of Clay's shows. For example, Maitland's Daily Mercury records that "a number of interesting stereoscopic views of the King's Coronation and views of New York were also shown" (7 Mar. 1903, 2). Stereoscopes had been in use since their invention in 1832. By the early 1850s they had incorporated the two lens system in tandem with two pictures, thus creating their three-dimensional perspective. Whichever contraption Clay used, it is known that the boxes were illuminated, although how this occurred remains unknown.

Some of the scenic views toured by Clay's included: views of the Commonwealth procession and "other interesting scenes," famous wars/battles, such as the Boer, China, American, Russo-Japanese wars, and views of London, Japan, Sydney, Paris, New York, (sometimes these were by day, other times by night)

EDISON'S POLYPHONE: The latest addition to Edison's audio machines was toured in 1902.

WAXWORKS: Each tour would contain up to around 50 waxworks (MDM: 7 Mar. 1903, 2). While there is little doubt that some models had been toured in previous years, there would always be a number of new representations, particularly the criminal characters. "As fresh crimes are discovered," wrote one reviewer, "figures of the perpetrators are added to the collection" (QT: 7 Apr. 1904, 7). Some models, as with the Breealong Blacks, were set in tableaux and presented along with photographs of victims, crime scenes, and the police etc. Figures known to have been toured by Clay's include:

Alexandria
 Baxter (Newtown murderer)
 Bearded Lady, The
 Bismarck
 Breelong Blacks, The (in tableaux)
 Brown, J.R.
 Buller, General
 Burns, Tommy (boxer)
 Butler, Lord
 Deeming (criminal)
 Edward VII, (King)
 Faure (President)
 Grand, Digby
 Johnson, Jack (boxer)
 Kelly, Ned
 Kenniffs, The (Aust cattle rustlers)
 Kieran, Barney
 Kitchener (Lord)
 Kruger, Paul
 Leo XIII (Pope)

Leyds, Dr
 McKinley (USA President)
 Noblo, M.A. (Australia's greatest cricketer)
 Olga, Madame
 Parkes, Sir Henry
 Quinlan, Thomas
 Cecil Rhodes
 Roberts (Lord)
 Roberts, Harriet and Edward
 Sangal, Mrs
 Seddon, Richard (recently deceased NZ premier)
 Shaw, (murderer of Constable Guilfoyle and other policemen)
 Squires, Bill (Australian heavy-weight boxer)
 Thaw, Henry (American Millionaire murderer)
 Trumper, Victor
 York (Duke of) 1902
 Victoria (Queen)
 White, Stanford (murdered American millionaire)

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITIONS: The tours sometimes included photographs of foreign places, people and events, with these generally being set up in an annex to the theatre or hall.

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TO-DAY

THEATRE ROYAL

TO-NIGHT

Harry('CLAYS')Company

IN A COMPLETE CHANGE OF
PROGRAMME.

PICKED VAUDEVILLE ARTISTS.
MANY NEW ARTISTS.
MANY OLD FAVOURITES.

**LAUGHTER IS THE BEST
MEDICINE**

Gympieites

Come and get your Medicine.
Prices as Usual.
Admission, 1/- everywhere. No Half
Price.
Further particulars, see Day-Bills,
etc.

WALLY EDWARDS, Manager.

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MISCELLANEOUS QUOTATIONS FROM REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS

Quotations concerning the non-vaudeville tours (1908 Dramatic Co, 1909 Walter Bentley Co, and 1911 Stanley McKay Pantomime Co) are presented as part of their respective inclusions within Appendix C. This section applies only to the Waxworks and vaudeville/revue tours.

1901

(Maitland) A Waxworks and Variety Show. - Elsewhere Mr Clay tells our readers he is visiting West Maitland, and brings with him a splendid waxworks collection.... The variety company is a strong cast as it includes the names of Mr Sam Wilson... the Smith Sisters... little Essie Clay (the child vocalist who is a great favourite here), Mr Will Bracey... and, of course, the redoubtable Harry himself.... The hall should be crowded nightly, Mr Clay's name being sufficient to guarantee that he is bringing along first-class entertainment ([MDM: 14 Feb. 1901, 2).

(Ipswich) The unsettled weather has militated against the attendance at Clay's waxworks during the last couple of evenings, but, nevertheless, usual programme has been submitted, and much appreciated by the patrons who were present. The company intends remaining throughout the week, and given anything like favourable weather, the proprietor feels confident of drawing big houses (QT: 21 Mar. 1901, 5).

(Rockhampton) The waxworks have been greatly improved since the company last visited Rockhampton, and now included the figures of a large number of celebrated or notorious persons... The best song of the night was Mr Harry Clay's "White White Rose," which was given in fine voice and loudly applauded (MB: 7 May 1901, 5).

1902

(Maitland) This company, unlike many others that have visited the town, continues a source of great attraction, and liberal is accorded each evening (MDM: 7 Mar. 1902, 2).

(Maitland) This evening the company will appear for the last time, prior to going to Tamworth. Presents were distributed last evening, and will also be given away to-night (MDM: 8 Mar. 1902, 2).

(Tamworth) Mr Clay since his last visit, has been through Tasmania and Victoria, and has had a very successful tour (TN: 7 Mar. 1902, 4).

(Rockhampton) It is almost needless to say that Mr Harry Clay's Waxworks Company met with a splendid house at the School of Arts last evening. The building was crowded upstairs and down (MB: 17 Apr. 1902, 6).

1903

(Maitland) An overflowing house. The hall was packed in such a manner as few have ever before witnessed. There were no seats available, and every foot of standing room was occupied. Those who went early had a glimpse at the waxworks, those who didn't go early simply couldn't get near the figures for the great crush. But it was not the waxworks that proved the draw, but the excellent artists engaged by Mr Clay, and the evident popularity of the prices (MDM: 7 July 1903, 2).

(Tamworth) The theatrical organisation run by... (Harry Clay), and which has paid several visits to Tamworth, is so favourably known here that comment is needless (TN: Tue 17 Mar. 1903, 3).

1904

(Charters Towers) The utmost seating accommodation of the Theatre Royal, with every available inch of standing room, and also a considerable part of the road, for those who could not get in, was utilised at the first appearance of Clay's Waxworks and Vaudeville Company, who are now paying their usual yearly visit, and judging by the unanimous note of approval struck by Tuesday night's audience, are likely to have one of the most successful seasons they have ever experienced here. From beginning to end there was no sound of disapprobation, but instead, enthusiastic recalls, only varied by most pronounced double and treble encores (NM: 18 May 1904, 2).

(Charters Towers) The exceptional value given by Clay's Waxworks and Vaudeville Co., for the nimble shilling is filling the theatre every night they open, even in this their second week, an experience that comes to but a few companies (NM: 25 May 1904, 2).

1905

(Rockhampton) There is no more popular and well-balanced company touring Queensland than under the management of Mr Clay, and not withstanding its frequent visits by a judicious change in performers and songs, there is always something new and engaging to interest those who patronise the performances (MB: 25 Apr. 1905, 6).

(Bundaberg) As a general rule Saturday night here is a particularly bad night for travelling entertainers to bid for public patronage, but all rules have their exceptions and apparently Mr Harry Clay can succeed in dissipating the evil reputation of the night just as often as he comes along (BM: 26 June 1905, 3).

1906

(Toowoomba) As seasons and successive years roll by, it is unusual to find entertainments improving as the season draws to its close - as a rule they gradually lose their interest - but it is in this feature in Mr Clay's entertainments, which has enabled him to achieve the unique success that has rewarded his judgment and ability as a promoter of vaudeville shows (TC: 5 April 1906, 3).

(Toowoomba) The most characteristic feature about the present visit of [Clay's] company [to Toowoomba] is the fact that so many are turned away each evening. Last night the house was packed, many being unable to gain admission (TC: 4 Aug. 1906, 3).

1907

(Toowoomba) It is not surprising that crowded houses greet this company every evening, for besides the excellence of the performance, the admission fees are extraordinarily liberal (TC: 10 Aug. 1907, 3).

(Gympie - return visit) Among the many companies which visit Gympie, none have been more popular or better patronised than Harry Clay's Waxworks and Vaudeville Companies.... Mr Clay has added new wax figures to the waxworks and has imported the Theatregraph, the latest importation from London (GT: 6 July 1907, 3).

1908

(Toowoomba) [Clay's Waxworks and Company] opened in the Town Hall last evening to a magnificent audience, the hall being packed from stage to escape doors.... The company wish to state that the picture songs and moving pictures could not be produced last evening owing to the electric light not being connected, but they will be produced to-night, when a complete change of programme will be given (TC: 21 Apr. 1908, 3).

(Gympie) Clay's popular vaudeville Company is at present occupying the boards at the Theatre Royal. The season opened on Thursday night to a packed house and again last night the building was crowded to its utmost capacity (GT: 9 May 1908, 6).

1909

(Gympie) While Mr Clay supplies an entertainment of remarkable cheapness he also supplies a galaxy of talent second to none in Australia, and unlike many other managers he always sends along the same class of entertainment and entertainers as he provides for his Sydney theatres (GT: 27 Mar 1909, 3).

(Charters Towers) All (of the company) were out to please, and all did so most successfully. There is not a "Passenger" in the crowd; all have their special claims to public recognition, and it is little wonder that Harry Clay, with the close attention he has always paid to the taste of the people, should occupy a distinctive position among touring companies, as one who never fails to afford patrons the best of talent procurable (NM: 25 May 1909, 5).

(Ipswich) Amongst the many entertainers that visit Ipswich none are more welcome than Clay's Waxworks and Company, who are unanimously regarded as the finest travellers' organisation of the kind yet seen, and fully up to metropolitan standard (QT: 12 July 1909, 4).

(Toowoomba) There is no one comes with a better repute than [Clay's Waxworks and Company], and experience teaches us who are welcome and vice versa; but the above now on their return visit, having just returned from North Queensland, have never looked back. They have had a triumphant tour onward (TC: 19 July 1909, 3).

1910

(Toowoomba) Harry Clay's Vaudeville Company performed again last evening for the third time this season, and another large, appreciative audience assembled to witness what has been rightly termed "the cleverest and daintiest vaudeville show ever presented to a Toowoomba audience." Patrons rush the door like thirsty dodgers storm a free coffee stall, and are passed through the entrance like sheep through a crush. Meanwhile, the countenance of the popular manager, Jimmy Boyle, is a huge smiling wrinkle (TC: 17 Mar. 1910, 3).

(Rockhampton) In the interval Mr. Clay explained that his company had advertised to show the moving picture of "The Funeral of the late King Edward." He regretted that they would be unable to do so, because the film that had been sent on to them was not quite up to his expectation: They had shown it at Longreach and he was not satisfied with it. An excellent film of the funeral of King Edward was now being shown in Rockhampton by Mr G.H. Birch. He (Mr Clay) had seen it, and it was a very fine picture. He had now been before the public for very many years and he had no desire to show anything that was not of the very best description. Mr Clay's manly speech was loudly applauded (DB: 1 July 1910, 4).

(Rockhampton) Mr Harry Clay, who was in fine voice, achieved success in the opening number "It's Only an Old-fashioned Cottage", but his best effort was in the illustrated song he has sung with so much success elsewhere "In the House of Too Much Trouble". Mr Clay was vociferously recalled.... The entertainment concluded with the farce "Razor Jim", in which Mr Harry Clay and Mr Ted Tutty created considerable merriment (DB: 4 July 1910, 4).

1913

(Toowoomba) On Saturday evening last, when [Clay's Company] commenced a season, the Town Hall was packed with an immense audience, the seating accommodation in every division being taxed to its utmost. The company includes some of the cream of Australia's vaudeville artists, and on Saturday evening the huge audience showed their appreciation in no stinted manner for the splendid and liberal manner in which they were catered for (TC: 25 Mar. 1913, 6)

(Ipswich) The holding capacity of the Town Hall was well tested last night, when Harry Clay's Waxwork Company commenced their season.... Ted Tutty received a great ovation on appearing on the stage (QT: 1 Apr. 1913, 4)

(Maryborough) Standing room at the Town Hall last night was scarcely obtainable long before the time for the commencement of Harry Clay's Vaudeville Company's performance. As is customary with this noted and talented company an excellent programme of mirth and music was afforded (MBC: 9 Apr. 1913, 8)

(Charters Towers) Another crowded house at the Theatre Royal last night followed the initial success of this talented company. Opening with a circle of dark men and fair ladies, bright in their gay attire and attractive in personal charm, an entertainment was provided at once melodious, witty, and clean.... Encores were frequent throughout the evening, scarcely an item passing without a recall... (NM: 27 May 1913, 4)

(Gympie) Numerous as have been the different companies that have visited this town, none have been more popular or have met with better success than [Harry Clay's company] (GT: 17 July 1913, 3)

1914

(Toowoomba) In consequence of the Town Hall being otherwise engaged, Harry Clay's New Vaudeville Company appeared at the Elite Picture Gardens last evening to an audience which taxed all seating accommodation to overflowing. A special holiday programme of Irish songs, dances, etc was submitted and was greatly appreciated (TC: 18 Mar. 1914, 4)

(Townsville) Some companies which come to Townsville appeal to a particular section of the community, and get either a good downstairs or a good upstairs house, but Harry Clay's company somehow seems to suit all classes and they get a good house in all parts (TDB: 5 May, 1914, 4).

(Charters Towers) Any company that can draw such a house as was present at the Theatre Royal last evening must be something out of the ordinary, and it can safely be said that Clay's Company is (NM: 16 May 1914, 4).

1915

(Toowoomba) Throughout Harry Clay's long and successful career as a showman, no better vaudeville combination has he had than that which gave its opening display to a packed audience in the Town Hall on Saturday night. It was a tribute to Mr Clay's past excellence in vaudeville service, and that reputation has been worthily upheld (TC: 6 Apr. 1915, 6).

(Maryborough) It is doubtful if any visiting vaudeville company is more popular to Maryborough lovers of clean and refined vaudeville than Clay's (MBC: 20 Apr. 1915, 5).

(Mackay) Mr Harry Clay is well-known in Mackay as a successful impresario, who knows just exactly what suits the tastes of his clientele, and he has always had a favourable reception here. His companies have always pleased and the one engaged on the present tour is as good as any which has visited our town. It was greeted by a full house at the Star Theatre last evening... (DM: 12 May 1915, 5).

1916

(Charters Towers) Harry Clay has become almost a household expression in Charters Towers, and little wonder, for the companies brought along each year by this astute business man have invariably offered entertainment of the highest standard, and they have included some of the best acts on the vaudeville stage (NM: 13 May 1916, 3).

1917

(Charters Towers) Since its inception, over seventeen years ago, Clay's Vaudeville Company has been a household term amongst the amusement lovers of the North, and its annual visit has been welcomed with relish and looked forward to with glad anticipations. Good from the beginning, each recurring visit has seen the company grow stronger in numbers, and more advanced in quality and merit, and its all-round popularity has waxed greater in proportion, till it now holds a unique position in the minds of northern theatre-goers (NM: 26 May 1917, 4).

(Charters Towers) When the curtain was rolled up at the Theatre Royal at 8 o'clock on Saturday night there was not even standing room in the huge auditorium - eloquent testimony of the popularity of this grand old company of entertainers (NM: 4 June 1917, 3).

1918

(Toowoomba) A very fair audience offered greeting... The name of this company is a household word in Toowoomba, as well as other parts of Queensland, and not a playgoer in the city would without good cause miss seeing any one of his recurring performances (TC: 20 May 1918, 6).

1927

(Toowoomba) Great interest is being aroused by the return of Clay's Company. Quite a number of years have gone by since the late Harry Clay sent a company to Toowoomba.... It is the intention of Clay's Theatres Ltd to bring back their old name and popularity.... The show they are bringing is a very strong one, headed by that famous artist Miss Nellie Kolle, who is one of the most popular performers in Australia.... One big feature of the show is the prices. The late Harry Clay made his name with his small prices. This show is going to do the same (TC: 17 Mar. 1927, 3).

(Toowoomba) Judging by last night's entertainment the quality of the vaudeville, so well known and appreciated in the old days, has in no way been, lowered and the performance was most enjoyable. There was a large audience.... A second performance will be given tonight, with a complete change of programme (TC: 19 Mar. 1927, 5).

1929

(Rockhampton) Mo and Sadie Gale, the two bright stars of the new company to open at the Coliseum next Saturday, arrived with their company by the southern mail yesterday and are busy rehearsing. This is the inimitable Mo's first appearance in this city and he is doing his best to have a long season here. He has practically an unlimited repertoire and laughs should be loud and long during his season. Sadie Gale, the leading lady, is sure to become a warm favourite and the popular open air resort should be crowded when this show opens (MB: 18 Sept. 1929, 3).

(Rockhampton) It is many years since the management of the Coliseum has staged an entertainment which attracted such a huge gathering as the opening performance on Saturday night of "Mo and His Merry-makers." Long before 8 o'clock the theatre was comfortably filled, but by the time the show commenced many continued to seek admission. Some were fortunate enough to be able to obtain seats, and the remainder had to postpone their visit to another night this week.... That the huge gathering was not disappointed was evidenced by the spontaneous outbursts of laughter which greeted them... The humour, though undeniably broad, was of the type on which these artists' reputations were gained, and was apparently expected by the crowd. Splendid vocal items and clever artistic dancing were features of the numbers of the other members of the company, who were also seen in many comic sketches (MB: 23 Sept. 1929, 3).

APPENDIX D

SYDNEY SUBURBAN AND NSW COUNTRY CIRCUITS

LOGISTICAL INFORMATION AND YEARLY SURVEY OF SUBURBAN CIRCUIT AND THEATRES

The Sydney suburban and New South Wales circuits operated along similar methods to the Queensland tours in that rail was the preferred form of transport for the company. According to information supplied by Charles Norman and Thea Row Hoskings, the company would generally travel to a show on the suburban circuit together - meeting at some central location in the city or at the Newtown Bridge Theatre. The use of rail to transport performers, equipment and sets between towns on the country circuit, meant that the company relied on the ready availability of labourers at each centre to help load and unload each troupe's requirements, as well as move them to the venue. It is known, however, that in later years Harry Clay employed his own truck drivers to move equipment between his city theatres and the suburban venues. Charles Norman remembers a man by the name of Long Ted who used to work for Clay in this capacity for many years.

The circuit also ran along certain patterns with the country circuit troupes coming off tour and onto the city circuit - following various routes (which changed over the years). The same would occur in the case of the Queensland tourists, with those who were contracted to stay with the company moving straight onto a circuit troupe at the completion of the northern tour.

There was obviously quite a deal of competition between the various companies as well as the venue managers within the organisation. This has become apparent through a number of insights published over the years which relate to the breaking of house records (and with wagers being placed on many occasions) and the attitude of the performers touring with the various troupes. The following are just a few of the examples:

A tenner offered by the [Clay's] management to anybody breaking the record held by Maurice Chenoweth's bunch at this house [Gaiety] (E: 13 Apr. 1921, 15)

From time to time great jealousy has been caused by this company being styled the No 1 Company. They are fully entitled to this honour, as they were the first revue company formed, and have drawn record business for the management wherever they have performed, it being a known fact that in the country people wait for the return of this popular company, and at Newtown during their week not one seat is vacant.... A word must not be forgotten for Arthur Morley (the writer of the revues, who also has been producer for the last three years), who during this time, has put on a new production each week, which in itself is a big record (AV: 23 May 1917, n. pag.)

Aside from these insights, little else is known about the circuits that have not already been discussed in the body of the thesis. It is likely, however, that more information can be found through further research into the NSW regional centres that the tours operated in.

The following is a list of known regional centres and suburban circuit venues serviced by Clay's. Due to there being less information published in the newspapers and trade journals during the early and late years of Clay's operations, however, these two periods still remain somewhat unclear.

1903 - 1908

Fri:	City	(Masonic Hall)
Sat:	Nth Sydney	(Masonic Hall)
	Newtown	(St George's Hall)
	Petersham	
	Balmain	
	Parramatta	

Note: In Aug. 1907, a review notes that "the Harry Clay Co showed in the St George's Hall last Saturday evening with their bioscope and moving pictures" (NC: 31 Aug. 1907, 4).

1908

Fri:	Nth Sydney	(Masonic Hall)
Sat:	City	(Standard Theatre)
	Newtown	(St George's Hall)
	Petersham	
	Balmain	
	Parramatta	

1909

Suburban circuit during the year: (continues through until August 1910)

Mon:	Petersham	
Tue:	Balmain	
Wed:	Newtown	(St George's Hall)
Thu:	Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Fri:	Nth Sydney	(St Leonard's Masonic Hall)
Sat:	City	(Standard Theatre)

[Source: TT: May 1909, 18 / Nov. 1909, 23]

1910

Suburban circuit as of August:

Mon:	Nth Sydney	(Masonic Hall)
Tue:	Leichhardt	(Town Hall)
Wed:	Newtown	(St George's Hall)
Thu:	Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Fri:	Parramatta	(Town Hall)
Sat:	City	(Standard Theatre)

[Source: TT: Sept. 1910, 22]

Suburban circuit as of November:

Mon:	Parramatta	(Town Hall)
Tue:	Leichhardt	(Town Hall)
Wed:	Newtown	(St George's Hall)
Thu:	Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Fri:	Randwick	(St Jude's Hall)
Sat:	City	(Standard Theatre)

[Source: TT: Nov. 1910, 10]

1913

Suburban circuit as of November:

Newtown	(Bridge Theatre) [St George's Hall prior to 19 July]
Balmain	(Balmain Theatre)
Parramatta	(Town Hall)
Nth Sydney	(Masonic Hall)
Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Leichhardt	(Coronation Theatre) Saturday nights

[Source: AV: 15 Nov. 1913, 7]

Note: Clay closed down his circuit in December, playing only the Bridge Theatre and the Coronation Theatre, Leichhardt after that time.

1914

Suburban circuit is:

Bridge Theatre, Newtown
Coronation Theatre, Leichhardt (Saturday nights)

1915

Bridge Theatre, Newtown

1916

Suburban circuit as of September:

Newtown	(Bridge Theatre)
Nth Sydney	(Coliseum Theatre)
Mascot	(Rosebury Theatre)
Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Parramatta	(Town Hall)
Auburn	

[Source: TT: Nov. 1916, 49]

NSW country circuit - South-Western Line, as of September:

Goulburn	Murrumburrah
Wagga Wagga	Young
Cowra	Grenfell
Bathurst	Albury
Portland	Lithgow
Katoomba	Yass
Cootamundra	

[Sources: AV: 27 Sept. 1916, n. pag. / TT: Nov. 1916, 49]

1917

Clay's companies returning from the country tour would play the following engagements:

WEEK 1:

Tue: Rockdale
Wed: Surrey Hills (Crown Star Theatre)
Thu: Parramatta
Fri: Ashfield (Town Hall)
Sat: Nth Sydney (Coliseum)

WEEK 2:

Mon: Nth Sydney (Coliseum)
Tue: Nth Sydney (Coliseum)
Wed: Mascot (Rosebury Theatre)
Thur: Mosman (Town Hall)
Fri: Newtown (Bridge Theatre - one week
engagement, generally third in circuit rotation)

[Source: AV: 27 June 1917, n. pag.]

Suburban circuit as of June:

Mon:	Nth Sydney	(Coliseum)
Tue:	Nth Sydney	(Coliseum)
	Rockdale	
Wed:	Mascot	(Rosebury Theatre)
	Surrey Hills	(Crown Star Theatre)
Thu:	Mosman	(Town Hall)
	Parramatta	
Fri:	Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Sat:	Nth Sydney	(Coliseum)

* Clay open the National Theatre, Balmain on 23 June with shows
announced for every evening

[Source: AV: 13 June 1917, "Harry Clay's Show..."]

Suburban circuit as of November:

Manly	(Eden Gardens)	Rockdale	
Nth Sydney	(Coliseum)	Mosman	(Town Hall)
Mascot	(Thornton's Rosebury Theatre)	Parramatta	(Town Hall)
Surry Hills	(Crown Star Theatre)	Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Bondi Junction	(Coronation Theatre)	Daceyville	
Coogee			

Note 1: Eden Gardens was being played nightly from 22 December through to the end of the summer holidays in 1918.

Note 2: The Coliseum was still operating three nights a week.

NSW country circuit - South-Western Line, as of June:

Goulburn		Harden
Albury		Young
Cowra		Junee
Bathurst		Katoomba
Lithgow		Cootamundra

[Source: AV: 13 June 1917, "Harry Clay's Show..."]

NSW country circuit - South-Western Line, as of November:

Goulburn	(Majestic Theatre)	Harden
Albury		Young
Cowra		Junee
Bathurst		Katoomba
Lithgow		Cootamundra
Wagga Wagga		Yass
Grenville		Wyalong

[Source: AV: 19 Nov. 1916 / 3 Oct. 1917, n. pags.]

1918

Suburban circuit as of August:

Newtown	(Bridge Theatre)	Burwood	
City	(Princess Theatre)	Coogee	
Manly	(Eden Gardens)	Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Nth Sydney	(Coliseum)	Bondi Junction	(Coronation Theatre)
Parramatta	(Town Hall)	Surry Hills	(Crown Star Theatre)

[AV: 30 Aug. 1919, n. pag.]

Note 1: Eden Gardens, as well as the Coliseum, both playing three nights a week (Sat, Mon, Tue). Advertising during the year doesn't mention all the venues, adding at the end of each list "and Elsewhere)

Note 2: Clay opened his account at the Princess Theatre in March

NSW country circuit - South-Western Line, as of August:

Goulburn	(Majestic Theatre)
Bathurst	
Katoomba	
Lithgow	

Note: Clay temporarily closed down most of the country circuit during the winter months, reopening it in October (AV: 11 Oct. 1918, 13)

Oddfellows' Hall, To-morrow (Sat.) Night.

AND EVERY SATURDAY.

Harry Clay's Master Companies.

(PRESENTED BY WALLY EDWARDS.)

TWO GREAT SPECIALTY ACTS, FIRST SPECIALTY ACT:—

WHIMSICAL WALKER, Whirling Wheelman.

SECOND SPECIALTY ACT:—

McLEAN and DRURY, Whirlwind Dancers.

THE FOLLOWING FAVORITES WILL ALSO APPEAR:—

SLAVIN AND THOMPSON.

GEORGE CROTTY,

IDA JARVIS,

ALICE WALTON,

FRED. WEBBER,

WILL CARLYON,

GEORGE KENDALL,

MADAM HUGGARD.

GRAND MUSICAL REVUE:—

"30,000 Miles a Minute."

(A FAST PRODUCTION.)

PRICES AS USUAL. SEATS MAY BE BOOKED AT CONFECTIONER'S SHOP.

Saturday. Trades Hall. Saturday.

PARAMOUNT SERVICE presents another Two star Programme of unusual quality—

"The House of Lies," 5000 ft.

Featuring EDNA GOODRICH, is a picture of high merit, and shows the temptation of beautiful girls, and the wiles of degraded men. It is beautifully acted, and stands as a masterpiece of EDNA GOODRICH.

"FRECKLES." 5000 ft. "FRECKLES."

Features LOUISE HUFF and JACK PICKFORD in a picturisation of the famous book. It is a most exciting and wonderful production, and JACK PICKFORD takes the part of the one armed little waif nicknamed FRECKLES. He is quite a hero, and holds his own in many a good scrap. It is a picture full of humor and amusement.

We also show 2000ft. COMEDY, and an "AMERICAN GAZETTE" which complete a Programme of the usual high-class standard.

Matinee at 3 p.m.

Matinee at 3 p.m.

Full Programme at both shows. A real treat for the children in this 5000ft. PICKFORD FUN-MAKER. Be there to see JACK at his best.

DON'T FORGET the GREAT BENEFIT to be given by the—

Newton-Carroll Dramatic Co. in Trades Hall To-Night.

1919

Suburban circuit as of February:

Newtown	(Bridge Theatre)	Bankstown	
City	(Princess Theatre)	Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Nth Sydney	(Coliseum)	Leichhardt	(Town Hall)
Manly	(Eden Gardens)	Surry Hills	(Crown Star)
Bondi Junction	(Coronation Hall)		

[Source: AV: 7 Feb. 1919, n. pag.]

Note 1: Clay took over the management of the Gaiety Theatre (in collaboration with Andy Kerr) as of November.

Note 2: The country circuit closed early in the year due to the flu epidemic.

1920

Suburban circuit as of April:

	Newtown	(Bridge Theatre)
	City	(Gaiety and Princess theatres)
Mon:	North Sydney	(Coliseum)
Tue:	Rockdale	(Town Hall)
Wed:	Manly	(Paris Gardens / Chatswood (School of Arts) from August
Thu:	Bondi Junction	(Coronation Theatre)
Fri:	Ashfield	(Town Hall)
Sat:	North Sydney	(Coliseum)

[Source: TT: Apr. 1920, 33]

Suburban circuit as of December: (now 2 circuits)

	Newtown	(Bridge Theatre)
	City	(Gaiety and Princess theatres)
Sat:	North Sydney	(Coliseum)
	Manly	(Paris Gardens)
Mon:	North Sydney	(Coliseum)
	Hurstville	(Queen's Theatre)
Tue:	Rockdale	(Town Hall)
	Paddington	(Oxford Theatre)
Wed:	Manly	(Paris Gardens)
	Mosman	(Town Hall)
Thu:	Bondi Junction	(Coronation
	South Kensington	(Democratic Hall)
Fri:	Ashfield	(Town Hall)
	Wollongong	(Boland's Theatre)

[Source: AV: 24 Dec. 1920, n. pag.]

HARRY CLAY'S CIRCUIT

STILL GROWING

FEATURING MUSICAL, COMEDY AND VAUDEVILLE.



EDEN GARDENS, MANLY.—Opening Shortly.
BRIDGE THEATRE, NEWTOWN.—Every Evening.
COLISEUM THEATRE, NORTH SYDNEY.—Every Sat., Mon., Tues.
SUBURBAN CIRCUIT.

Parramatta, Ashfield, Mosman, Crown Street, Rockdale, Mascot.
COUNTRY CIRCUIT.

Clay's Majestic Theatre, Goulbourn, Albury, Wagga, Cooma,
Mundra, Junee, Harden, Young, Cowra, Bathurst, Lithgow,
Katoomba, etc.

LONG ENGAGEMENTS ASSURED—GOOD VERSATILE ARTISTS—AND

WITHIN A STONE'S THROW OF SYDNEY.

NO DAY WORK!—A FAIR DEAL!—A FAIR SALARY!—
AND NO SWEATING!

(Australian Variety 20 June 1919, n. pag.)

HARRY CLAY'S CIRCUIT

REVUE AND VAUDEVILLE.

Embracing PRINCESS THEATRE (Railway Square), EVERY
EVENING AND MATINEE EVERY SATURDAY; BRIDGE
THEATRE (Newtown), EVERY EVENING; COLISEUM
(North Sydney), SATURDAY, MONDAY; EDEN GARDENS
(Manly); SATURDAY, MONDAY, and . . .

BANKSTOWN ASHFIELD, LEICHHARDT, SURRY HILLS,
BONDI JUNCTION, and ELSEWHERE.

WANTED

HIGH-CLASS SPECIALISTS AND GOOD HANDY PEOPLE FOR
REVUE. Call or Write J. H. White, Clay's Agency, 256 Pitt St. Sydney

(Australian Variety 8 Aug. 1919, n. pag.)

Harry Clay's Vaudeville

NIGHTLY, AT 8
THE

PRINCESS THEATRE

RAILWAY SQUARE
(George Street)
VAUDEVILLE &
REVUE.

Prices: 6d. to 2/-
MATINEES:
Sat. and all Holidays,
at 2.30.

NIGHTLY, AT 8.
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GAIETY THEATRE

OXFORD STREET
(Hyde Park.)
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Prices: 6d. to 2/-
MATINEES:
Sat. and all Holidays,
at 2.30.

NIGHTLY, at 8.
THE

BRIDGE THEATRE

Right at the Bridge,
NEWTOWN.
VAUDEVILLE &
REVUE.

Prices: 6d. to 2/-.

CLAY'S VAUDEVILLE BOOKING AGENCY,

4 Young's Chambers, 256 Pitt St., City.

ALWAYS AN OPENING FOR GOOD VAUDEVILLE AND REVUE
PEOPLE.

ALL CLASSES OF PERFORMERS SUPPLIED FOR GARDEN FETES,
AT HOMES, SMOKE CONCERTS, Etc. See J. H. WHITE ("Whitie.")

(Australian Variety 11 Dec. 1919, n. pag.)

1921

Suburban circuit as of March:

	Newtown City	(Bridge Theatre) (Princess and Gaiety theatres)
Sat:	North Sydney Manly	(Coliseum) (Paris Gardens)
Mon:	North Sydney Hurstville	(Coliseum) (Queen's Theatre)
Tue:	Rockdale Paddington	(Town Hall) (Oxford Theatre)
Wed:	Manly Mosman	(Paris Gardens) (Town Hall)
Thu:	Bondi Junction South Kensington	(Coronation) (Democratic Hall)
Fri:	Ashfield Wollongong	(Town Hall) (Boland's Theatre)

[Source: E: 30 Mar. 1921, 22]

Suburban circuit as of September:

	Newtown City	(Bridge Theatre) (Princess and Gaiety theatres)
Sat:	North Sydney Leichhardt	(Coliseum) (Town Hall)
Mon:	North Sydney Gladesville	(Coliseum)
Tue:	Rockdale Five Dock	(Town Hall)
Wed:	Balmain Parramatta	(National Theatre) (Town Hall)
Thu:	Bondi Junction South Kensington	(Coronation Hall) (Democratic Hall)
Fri:	Wollongong Ashfield	(Boland's Theatre) (Town Hall)

[Source: TT: Sept. 1921, n. pag.]

1922

Suburban circuit as of March:

Newtown City	(Bridge Theatre) (Princess and Gaiety theatres)		
North Sydney Croyden	(Coliseum)	Parramatta Auburn	
Mosman Hurstville Five Dock	(Town Hall)	Bondi Junction Burwood Wollongong	(Coronation) (Boland's)
Balmain Ashfield	(National Theatre) (Town Hall)		

[Source: TT: Mar. 1922, 16]

Suburban circuit as of December:

Newtown City	(Princess and Gaiety theatres)		
North Sydney	(Coliseum)	Randwick	(Randwick Theatre)
Leichhardt	(Town Hall)	Manly	
Ryde		Glebe Junction	
Balmain		Bondi Junction	(Coronation Hall)
Campsie		Rockdale	(Acme Theatre)
Ashfield	(Town Hall)		

[Source: TT: Dec 1922, 23]

NSW country circuit as of December:

Maitland
Cessnock
Wallsend
West Wallsend
Kurri Kurri
Lakemba

[Source: TT: Dec. 1922, 23]

1923

Suburban circuit as of June:

	Newtown City	(Bridge Theatre) (Princess and Gaiety theatres)
Sat:	North Sydney	(Coliseum)
Mon:	North Sydney	(Coliseum)
Tue:	Hurstville	(Queen's Theatre)
Wed:	Balmain	(National Theatre)
Thu:	Bondi Junction	(Coronation Theatre)
Fri:	Ashfield	(Town Hall)

[Source: TT: June 1923, 27]

1924

Suburban circuit as of September

Newtown City	(Bridge Theatre (Princess and Gaiety theatres)
North Sydney	(Coliseum)

Note: Individual suburbs not advertised or mentioned, although the circuit is still operating (TT: June 1924, 21)

1925

Suburban circuit as of September

Newtown City	(Bridge Theatre (Princess, Gaiety and Hippodrome)
North Sydney	(Coliseum)

Note 1: Individual suburbs not advertised or mentioned, although the circuit of some size is still operating

Note 2: The Hippodrome was being used Saturday nights only

1926

Suburban circuit as of August:

Newtown City	(Bridge Theatre (Gaiety and Hippodrome)
Leichhardt Ashfield North Sydney	(Strand Theatre) (Town Hall) (Coliseum)

[Source: JI: 26 Aug. 1926, 21]

1927

Suburban circuit as of

Newtown City	(Bridge Theatre (Gaiety)
Balmain North Sydney	(Coliseum)

Note: Only a few individual suburbs are mentioned, although the circuit is still operating (JI: 19 May 1927, 29)

1928-29

Very little concerning Clay's circuit or its artists was published during the last two years of its operations. It is known, however, that the Gaiety was still under Clay's management until mid to late 1929, with the Bridge Theatre closing under the Clay banner in late November (at which time it was leased by Harry Kitching and Amy Rochelle). The North Sydney Coliseum license was not renewed during 1929. Other details established to date include:

- The company appears to have been playing seasons in Wollongong in 1928. The *Illawarra Mercury* reports, for example that Clay's Vaudeville Company, headed by Billy "Skeeta" Cass, played a one night season at the Crown Theatre on 9 March (9 Mar. 1928, 10).

APPENDIX E

CLAY'S MANAGERS, STAFF AND PARTNERS

For updated biographies on these practitioners see the Australian Variety Theatre Archive:
<http://ozvta.com/> (or at Pandora <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-143747>)

DETAILS CONCERNING PEOPLE WHOSE INVOLVEMENT CAN BE CONSIDERED SIGNIFICANT IN RELATION TO HARRY CLAY'S ORGANISATION

This list has been compiled as part of the research conducted for this thesis, and is an extension of the information collected as part of Appendix A. The volume of material available for each inclusion has no bearing on the importance of that individual, or partnership to Clay's, but simply reflects the amount of information that was able to be located during the search. For example, while Wally Edwards is undoubtedly one of the most important figures to have been engaged by Clay, relatively little information regarding his personal details has been found so far. On the other hand, due to the invaluable assistance of Jo Mercer and Valmai Goodlet, I have been able to access quite a deal of information regarding Ms Mercer's grandfather, Ted Tutty, and Ms Goodlet's father Maurice Chenoweth.

The idea behind this survey is two-fold. First, the word limit restriction placed on this Masters thesis, has meant that much of this information, (which I believe to be pertinent to the subject at hand) had to be left out of the main body of the work. In this regard it can be seen that any discussion of the importance of Harry Clay and his vaudeville and revue company to the theatrical history of Australia must in some way include mention of these artists, managers, staff and partners. Second, it is my hope that further research into the area of Australian vaudeville and minstrelsy will be carried out, and that this, and the other appendices attached to this dissertation, will provide a useful starting point for the researcher. The lack of available reference points or knowledge concerning this particular form of entertainment and the people who took part in it has been a major hurdle to overcome in completing this project.

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A.R. ABBOTT

Businessman and Partner/Secretary/Treasurer of the Bridge Theatre Co. Archibald Robert Abbott is believed to have been associated with Harry Clay from around 1901. He became a member of the partnership which formed the Bridge Theatre Co in 1913. Around 1914 he is also thought to have owned a hardware business. Abbott stayed on as Secretary for Clay's after Harry Clay's death, and most likely retained his share of the business for some time, too.

Not much is yet known about Abbott, other than his role as the Bridge Theatre Company's Secretary and Treasurer. In 1901 he is believed to have accompanied Harry Clay's first tour of Queensland, being included among the company on a shipping manifest. In this regard he most likely acted as business manager, and possibly helped finance the tour. With Clay and Harold T. Morgan he formed a partnership to build and operate the Bridge Theatre, Newtown. Abbott is also believed to have operated a hardware store at 511 George Street in Sydney around 1914, in addition to owning several properties throughout Sydney, including a building at 1/3 Denison Street across the road from the Bridge Theatre, which served as its office. He also owned 7/13 Bedford Street, Newtown; a property in Railway Ave, Eastwood (where he lived for several years prior to 1925), and is believed to been the owner of another at 8 Paisley Rd, Croyden, from 1926 onwards.

According to information included in Harry Clay's Deceased Estate File, Abbott purchased a block of land from Clay at Lot 1, Dampier Parade Sutherland in January 1917. There was never any documentation made out with regard to either Clay's purchase of the land or his sale to Abbott. Strangely, in 1953, Catherine Clay made a Statutory Declaration stating that she had only recently become aware that the same property should have been included in Clay's estate. The reasons behind this are not clear at this stage, although there seems to be some inconsistency involved in Abbott's statements to the Commissioner of Stamp Duties, in which he declared that the property was his and that all moneys had been paid to Clay prior to his death in 1925.

Abbott's role with Clay's after 1925 is not clear, although he is believed to have remained on with the company for some time after this date.

JIMMY BOYLE

Tour Manager/Theatre Manager/ Advance Rep. (1901-ca.1912,1916-1924) Born James William Boyle in Camden Town, London, in 1872. Associated with Harry Clay for some 20 years. He was the advance rep for Clay's Queensland tours from 1901 to 1903, and then tour/business manager until 1912. He also acted as Manager for the 1909 Walter Bentley, and 1911 Stanley McKay pantomime tours of Queensland. Boyle operated a business in Brisbane around 1915, while also working for C.E. King. In 1916 he acted as the Fullers Manager at the National Theatre, and during this period he also ran a private business next to the Theatre Royal. Around the end of 1916, early 1917 he returned to work for Harry Clay as the House Manager for the Coliseum, Nth Sydney, leaving to manage Eden Gardens, Manly, from 1918. He is known to have looked after the Bridge Theatre around 1923-24. Married to Nora Ann Boyle, he died suddenly on the 1st of November 1924.

Described as a "dapper little Englishman," Boyle was a longtime associate of Harry Clay's, beginning from at least around 1901 when he acted as Advance Rep for the first Waxworks tour of Queensland. In 1904 and 1905 he acted as the company's business manager, while Harry Clay ran the tour operations. When Clay temporarily retired from the Queensland tours to look after his Sydney circuit, Boyle took over both duties, continuing on in that role until 1912.

Jimmy Boyle was a popular figure in the vaudeville industry, and an extremely well-liked character within the Queensland regional centres he toured during the early decade of the 20th century. He was regarded quite highly as a reliable and hardworking manager, not only by Harry Clay, but also by many who knew him. After the 1910 tour he returned to England for a period, requiring Clay to once again tour Queensland as the company's manager. Boyle returned to take control of the business for the Stanley McKay pantomime tour of Queensland in 1911, and the following year's tour for Harry Clay.

From around 1914/15 Boyle is known to have worked for C.E. King's Brisbane theatrical enterprises while at the same time operating his own "squash shop," (refreshment room) in the city. He returned to Sydney in late 1915/early 1916 to do similar business with Fullers as their manager at the National Theatre, Sydney. He also ran a successful refreshment room next to the Theatre Royal, it being a regular meeting place for vaudevillians. Sometime around the turn of 1916/17 he returned to Harry Clay's company as the manager of the North Sydney Coliseum, where he remained until October 1918, at which time he was given the operations of Clay's newly opened Eden Garden's theatre in Manly. He stayed with Clay's until his sudden and unexpected death in November 1924, just three and a half months before his longtime friend and boss Harry Clay died. During his last years he was the House Manager at the Newtown Bridge Theatre, ca.1923-24.

-
- A better worker than Mr Boyle I never met. (Harry Clay)
 - Harry Clay had a little dapper English manager [named] Jim Boyle. When a circuit went on a north Queensland tour, it was Boyle's job to write ahead and book the local school of arts. The company arrived at one small town to find no booking had been

made. One afternoon Harry Clay received Boyle's letter back from the dead letter office. It was addressed to "The Caretaker, School of Arts, Queensland." At that minute Boyle walked in swinging his cane. Clay abused him roundly till he ran out of breath. Boyle was crestfallen: "You know Mr Clay," he said, "I ought to be kicked." A happy smile lit Harry Clay's face. He jumped to his feet and delivered a mighty blow with his boot that Boyle was still rubbing days after ("Sometimes" ARG: no details).

- One of the big tasks was to offer a forthcoming attraction that would ensure a full house at the next show. [Jimmy] Boyle had the job one night. He had heard Miss Annie Jones sing privately and decided to build her up..... "Thank you for your attendance," Boyle told the audience. "I want to say that next Friday night you will be given the honour of hearing the greatest soprano voice ever produced in the country." For ten minutes he kept the audience sitting while he built up Annie Jones' reputation. After the show some of the audience came back stage: "Is this fair dinkum?" they asked. "My oath, it is." Next Friday the theatre was packed. They all came to hear the new Australian nightingale. Miss Jones was the last act. She waddled on to the stage. There was deep silence. She opened her mouth. From it came a voice so thin the orchestra leader in the pit could hardly hear it. The audience stayed still for a minute. Then all hell broke loose. The mob raged and roared. Missiles of every description were thrown at the unhappy soprano. Boyle ducked out the stage door. He could still hear the shouting as he disappeared up King Street ("Sometimes" ARG: no details).

- Jimmy Boyle once tried his strength on a punching machine. He carefully put away glasses in his vest pocket, and let go. Something went click on the floor. "I've broken the machine," said the fragile, deluded Jimmy. He stooped to the floor to look. "It's only my glasses," he murmured, picking these up, and making a desperate attempt to look as dignified as usual (TT: Aug. 1910, 6).

- Jimmy Boyle recently left Sydney for England. Among those at the wharf to see him off was the big-hearted, ever-generous Harry Clay (TT: Dec. 1910, 8).

- Among his pals Jimmy Boyle was long known as "Simple Simon." Mr Boyle once got the tip for a double at Randwick (Sydney). On his way into the city from the suburbs to back it for £500 he went into a barber's shop for a shave. The barber persuaded him the horse he was finishing with was no good, and that for this neddy he should substitute Simple Simon - then a good hurdler and steeple chaser. Mr Boyle varied the double accordingly. The two horses he was originally told to back - and intended backing, until the barber - won. So Mr Boyle, through tinkering with Simple Simon, who didn't get a place, lost the £500 that would have otherwise been his. Hence the designation, "Simple Simon." But it was Mr Boyle's luck, later on, to get back on at least one of those who were always guying him over the Simple Simon affair. This was Harry Clay. "Do you see who's starting today?" remarked Mr Clay to Mr Boyle at one of the pony-meetings. "Yes; and I'm going to back it," replied Mr Boyle, looking at his race-book. The horse referred to was Queen Bird. "Queen Bird" was another of the pet names by which Mr Boyle was known to Mr Clay. Mr Boyle took £100 to £5 on Queen Bird. It won. Mr Clay's horse was left at the post. Altogether it was a disastrous outing for Mr Clay, because he was that day betting for the first time on a dead-sure system respecting which he had got the whisper, and it wasn't until he had done in three figures that he discovered he couldn't have done worse if he had backed nothing but bookmakers' tips. So for a few days it was Mr Boyle's turn to laugh; and he made abundant use of the opportunity, too (TT: June 1915, 49).

- Jimmy Boyle reports excellent business at the Eden Gardens, Manly, and last week established a record house with Toyland (Ted Stanley and Co). Jimmy says that this house will certainly take some beating. It might be mentioned that Jimmy is one of Manly's foremost surfers (AV: 24 Jan. 1919, 5)

- Mr Boyle was noticed amongst the breakers last Saturday. His fine figure looked like a Roman Gladiator as he posed in the sun (AV: 28 Feb. 1919, 9).

JACK CAMPBELL

Tour manager/advance rep. (1908,1913) Campbell was perhaps the best-known Advance Rep working in Australia during the early decades of the twentieth century. He was engaged by many entertainment organisations as both an Advance Rep and a Manager, including the Fitzgerald Bros Circus, Harmston's Circus, James Brennan, the Coleman-Taylor Pantomime Co, and Harry Clay.

Campbell is believed to have begun his association with Harry Clay in 1908, when he undertook the position of Advance Rep for the Dramatic Co tour of Queensland. Around 1912, he became James Brennan's manager at the Hippodrome in Newtown, before returning to Clay's in 1913, whereupon he again toured Queensland - this time taking on the role of tour and business manager for the interim tour between the Jimmy Boyle and Wally Edwards eras. Whether he played any further role with the company is unknown at this stage. Campbell is known to have toured Queensland in 1917 as the Advance for Taylor and Coleman's Pantomime tour. The Theatre described Campbell in 1912 as "the most popular, experienced, and reliable 'advances' in Australia" (Jan. 1912, 21).

LES CANNIS

Projectionist-operator/circuit manager/house manager. Les Cannis began working for Harry Clay ca.1912, touring Queensland for the company in 1913 and 1914 as a projectionist. He worked in the same capacity for Clay on his Sydney circuit, in addition to the role of Front of House manager, establishing himself primarily at the NBT. By 1917 Cannis was a circuit manager on Clay's NSW southern line. He continued with Clay's up until at least 1925.

Described by Australian Variety in 1917 as one of the "Heads" in Goulburn, where he goes to manage for Clay's every week, Les Cannis was an honorary member in the Goulburn Racing Club, and Vice President of several associations in that town. He was also regularly referred to as "Handsome Les" over the many years he worked for Harry Clay. Cannis is believed to have started out with the company around 1912 as a projectionist and operator. He eventually became one of Clay's principle employees over the next decade or so, working in various positions - including Front of House manager and circuit manager during the 1917-1918 period. A 1918 report also records that he had begun to involve himself in filmmaking around this period - although this was no doubt separate from his employment with Harry Clay. It is known that he was still on the company's pay role in 1925.

-
- Les Cannis, the handsome and ever-smiling one at the Bridge Theatre, is one of the most popular and obliging fellows one could wish to meet. Les is invaluable to Harry Clay in every capacity. It would be a good movement if the firm could place him in charge of one of their suburban houses, as he is capable of working up good business (AV: 187 1917, 13).

MAURICE CHENOWETH

Clay's manager/tenor/revue producer/straightman/music teacher. (1914, 1916-1928). Born Maurice Clayton Chenoweth on the 26 December 1881 at Aldinga, Sth Australia. He apparently began an apprenticeship as a plumber prior to becoming a Gold Medal student at the Eder Conservatorium, Adelaide. Chenoweth later toured Australasia for five years with the Westminster Glee Club, followed by a lengthy engagement with West's Pictures circuit in South Australia. He performed with the Leidertafel and Royal Philharmonic Societies, before engagements in vaudeville with James Brennan, Ted Holland, and J.C. Bain. He started with Harry Clay in 1914, and later worked with Bert Howard before an engagement on the Fuller circuit around 1916. He later returned to Clay's where he eventually worked as a theatre/circuit manager and revue producer. Upon Harry Clay's death Chenoweth became General Manager of the Bridge Theatre Co, holding that position until 1928, at which time he returned to the Fullers as a House Manager. Married to Florence Gertrude Quarrell he had two children Romney and Valmai. He died aged 87 in 1968, Sydney.

One of Australia's foremost tenors between ca.1910 to 1920, Chenoweth had a sound early musical training which saw him gain concert platform experience. Born in South Australia to Edwin George Chenoweth, a sadler from Cornwall (UK), and Esther, an organist, he undertook his musical training under Myles Seharer [sic] and Frederick Bevan (a Professor of Singing who was educated as a chorister at All-Saints Margaret St, London). Chenoweth, who was also an accomplished pianist, won several scholarships as well as scoring the highest ever points in his final examination (145 out of 150) to that date - 1902. He is known to have performed in The Messiah at the Exhibition Hall, Brisbane in December 1909 for the Brisbane Musical Union; as Arthur Donegal in Floradora for the Petersham Choral Society (Jan 1910), and in Elgar's Caractacus, presented by the Royal Sydney Philharmonic Society, Town Hall June 1910.

Around 1911 he began a career in vaudeville starting with Brennan's Amphitheatre Ltd (Bris) and the National Theatre (Syd) in 1911, and later with Ted Holland's shows at the Empire Theatre (Bris) in 1913. In 1914 he undertook engagements with both J.C. Bain and Bert Howard, as well as an initial season with Harry Clay. Following this he worked for a period of time with the Fullers and Jacky Landow. In early 1915 Chenoweth took his own concert party on tour through the NSW Northern Rivers, and around the same time was elected to an executive position with the Australian Variety Artists Federation. Towards the end of 1916 Chenoweth returned to Clay's. He then spent the next ten years with Clay, first as a tenor and straightman to a number of comics. One of these included a lengthy stint as foil to Ted Tutty during the years 1917-18, as well as some regular turns with Reg Thornton (the Kangaroosta). As a singer he also regularly partnered Harry Clay, Marshall Crosby and Arthur Morley among others.

During 1916 Chenoweth began accepting students for his own training college, offering a scholarship system to successful applicants. The following year he started producing revues for Clay's and by 1920 was to become one of the company's senior managers. He is reported in 1923 as "nightly looking after the programmes at Clay's three city venues the Gaiety, Princess and Newtown Bridge Theatres." After Harry Clay's death in 1925 he became the company's General Manager, leaving to take on the position of House Manager for the Fullers in August 1928. He continued on in theatre management for a number of years, followed in this department by his son Romney, who worked for the Tivoli organisation for many years.

Maurice Chenoweth was extremely popular within the industry, and highly regarded by both Harry Clay and his artists as an extremely versatile and tireless worker. As a singer he had few peers, being especially noted for his clear articulation. He was regarded, along with Marshall Crosby as the best singer on the Clay circuit. As the straightman to Ted Tutty, he formed one of the

more popular double acts to have performed for Clay's, leading to his reputation for versatility and adaptability. According to the Theatre he had, by December 1917, "developed into a particularly fine all-round vaudeville performer, [who] besides being always good for an enthusiastic recall for his well-delivered tenor songs [was also] at home on the stage in a multitude of other directions" (Dec. 1917, 47). He was also known to have consistently broken the company's box office records at each of the theatres he was responsible for.

-
- Maurice Chenoweth caused quite an outburst in singing "The Death of Nelson" (AV: 19 Aug. 1914, 10)
 - Maurice Chenoweth and Harry Clay were at their best in singing "Jack Crawford" and "Annie Laurie" and they went for their good work the best on the bill (AV: 26 Aug. 1914, 6).
 - Maurice Chenoweth, who was down the south coast last week in conjunction with Ella Caspers concert company, created quite a sensation with his singing. The fair-haired one was in fine form, and the audience demanded song after song from him, till in the end he had to come forward and make a speech (AV: 13 June 1917, 12).
 - Maurice Chenoweth figured as a composer at Harry Clay's Bridge Theatre last week. The opening number of the revue, "Papa's Troubles," was written by him, and if this is a sample of his work, more would like to be seen of it (AV: 27 June 1917, 3).
 - The programme at the Newtown Bridge Theatre for the week November 10-16 included an item "Chenoweth and Tutty - White and Black." In this Mr Chenoweth appeared in evening clothes, and Mr Tutty as a black-faced comedian. Such was Mr Chenoweth's work as to merit his being described as the Fred Niblo of vaudeville. Pattering with Mr Tutty he displayed an ease and confidence - to say nothing of the point he gave to every line he uttered - that imparted to the turn a distinction rarely seen in vaudeville (TT: Dec. 1917, 47).
 - Maurice Chenoweth is now well into a successful stride, and doing excellent work, producing revues for Harry Clay; in fact the latter claims the good business that is being done by the company to M.C.'s good work. During the past four months more successful revues have been staged at the Bridge Theatre than have ever been witnessed before. Maurice seems to have just what the audience's like. In the new year he has some real winners up his sleeve (AV: 14 Dec. 1917, n. pag.)
 - Maurice Chenoweth and Ted Tutty are the hit of the bill. The screams of laughter they get set aside any doubt on that point (TT: Feb. 1918, 41).
 - Chenoweth and Tutty held the stage for quite a while with their bright and bidding fair to outdo Caldwell and Crawford routine of patter, and their duets - eh; Caldwell (AV: 1 Mar 1918, n. pag.).
 - Maurice Chenoweth has now been producing for Harry Clay for 104 weeks, this in itself is a splendid advertisement for Maurice's ability; he is still Johnny Walker (AV: 14 June 1918, n. pag.).
 - Maurice Chenoweth, whose versatility is remarkable, has certainly acquired a wonderful knowledge of the vaudeville game since his association with Harry Clay (AV: 11 Oct. 1918, 15).
 - [Maurice Chenoweth] delights the house, first with "The Rivers of Love," and then "My Dear Irish Mother." Temperament and personality are largely contributing elements in Mr Chenoweth's pronounced success as a singer. He has to be accorded the further credit of being an ideal spruiker-in-general (TT: Nov. 1919, 28).
 - A tenner offered by the [Clay's] management to anybody breaking the record held by Maurice Chenoweth's bunch at this house [Gaiety] (E: 13 Apr. 1921, 15).
 - Maurice Chenoweth's company has been drawing capacity since last Saturday (E: 1 June 1921, 15).

LOU COURTNEY

Film and limelight operator/advance rep/juggler/equilibrist/spruiker. (1904-c1926) Courtney is first known to have worked for Harry Clay in 1904 as the Queensland tour's Advance Rep. Prior to this he is believed to have worked in various theatrical areas, once as an actor in Her Majesty's Dramatic Co (ca.1893). As Clay's Queensland Advance Rep he apparently toured in that position until 1907, after which he began to operate the company's film and limelight projectors, in addition to occasional performances as an equilibrist. Courtney is also known to have performed the same duties on Clay's Sydney circuit until around 1915 or so, at which time he joined the war effort, serving some time at the front. He returned to Clay's after the war, taking on the position of House Manager at the Bridge Theatre for some period after Harry Clay's death.

Lou Courtney was another of Harry Clay's long time employees, and an essential component in his success, particularly during the early years of his Queensland operations. Versatile and reliable, Courtney, like others of his kind working in the vaudeville/minstrel era, found his niche in the industry by virtue of his ability to adapt to new challenges, in whatever area was

required. Originally working in serious theatre, he is known to have toured Queensland in 1893 as part of Her Majesty's Dramatic Co, a troupe which also included a young Albert Baily. In 1904 he began his association with Harry Clay, taking care of the Advance Rep duties for Clay's Queensland tours. In 1908, he took over the operation of the film and limelight projecting on these tours, continuing to do the same on Clay's Sydney circuit until he joined the war effort sometime around 1915/16 (he would have been in his late thirties). After the war, in which he spent some time at the front, Courtney returned to Clay's, taking on the job of spruiker at the Gaiety around 1920, replacing Joe Lashwood. He became House Manager at the Bridge Theatre after Harry Clay's death in 1925.

-
- 6 Sept: Opening night of Her Majesty's Dramatic Company at the School of Arts, Charters Towers. The company includes: Albert Bailey, James South, H. Norman, Flossie Stanhope, Nellie Harland, Carrie Hubert, H. Hubert and Lou Courtney (NM: 6 Sept. 1893, 1).

WALLY EDWARDS

Baritone/stage and tour manager/interlocutor/illustrated songs/endman. A respected minstrel singer, Edwards toured Queensland in 1898 with J.L Travers Continental Vaudeville Co, along with Harry Clay. He began his association with Harry Clay's company around 1902, touring the state on no less than fourteen occasions, the last five as Tour and/or Business Manager. Edwards also acted as circuit manager for Clay on his South-western line (primarily the Blue Mountains and mid west area of NSW) between 1916 and 1919. In addition to his managerial activities Edwards also continued to perform as an entertainer, either in the role of singer or interlocutor.

Wally Edwards' early life and career remains to date somewhat of a mystery. It is possible that he initially came from north Queensland, where the name W. Edwards is noted in relation to an amateur minstrel company, the Black Diamond Minstrel and Variety Co around the Charters Towers region (ca.1894-1895). W. Edwards, in the advertising for these shows was apparently both a singer and Music Director (NM: 13 Nov. 1895, 1). The first accurately documented appearance of Wally Edwards to date is, however, in 1898 when he accompanied the J.L. Travers' Continental Vaudeville Company through Queensland, along with Harry Clay and family, performing solo turns as well as duets with Clay.

Edwards' first engagement with Clay's organisation was to be in 1902, when he was employed as a baritone and endman for the Waxworks and Vaudeville tour of Queensland. He later specialised in Illustrated Songs, gaining a reputation in the northern state as one of the company's most popular personalities, touring annually up until 1907, followed by a tour in 1909, and then from 1912 to 1918. During the last five tours he was employed as both Tour Manager and/or Business Manager.

Around 1909 Edwards was engaged as the interlocutor at the Amphitheatre (Syd), in addition to his vocal duties as an illustrated singer. Back on Clay time by 1912, he continued to perform as an entertainer, turning to management duties in 1916 when Harry Clay began his NSW country circuit. Edwards took on the management duties for the South-western Line, primarily the Blue Mountains and mid-West area up until 1919, in addition to his Queensland tour duties - he having assumed the tour manager role from 1914.

By 1918 Edwards had all but retired as a performer, only returning to the stage in guest appearances. In July 1919, he was reported to have been in a bad state of health for some time, being given a benefit at the Princess "by his life-long friend Harry Clay" that month (AV: 18 July 1919, 3). In 1920 he returned to the stage for Joe Archer's benefit.

There are no references regarding Edwards' career between 1920 and 1927, however, it is more than likely that he remained in a management position for Harry Clay on either one of his suburban or country circuits, or perhaps for some period of time at the Bridge Theatre. In 1927, he was recalled by the company to take on another Queensland tour, with headline act Nellie Kelle.

Highly respected within the industry for his experience and reliability as a vaudeville manager, Edwards was also considered one of the finest local bass-baritones around. The Theatre wrote of him: "Wally is as robust of voice as he is of person - which is saying a deal. When he attacks a high note the atmosphere fairly vibrates and trembles like an hysterical girl who has seen a ghost" (Nov. 1909, 59). Bert Howard, too, remembers Edwards as giving him the advice which led to his instigating the highly successful Sunday film screenings at the old Gaiety Theatre in Castlereagh St.

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- Wally Edwards, the portly interlocutor at the Amphitheatre has a singing voice containing the penetrating qualities of a shell fired from a battleship... It may have only been a coincidence; but one night recently, when his vocal chords were working at high pressure, he filled the Amphi with such an amount of sound that a loose brick in the far end of the building flew fairly out and half-way across the street, and narrowly missed killing a red-headed policeman as it fell (TT: Nov. 1909, 59).

* Mr Edwards has so often toured Queensland with Mr Clay, from year to year, that he's as well known up that way as the principal himself. Evidently Mr Edwards' singing agrees with him, because he keeps so broadening out that, if he continues in the same manner, Mr Clay will have to give him a special stage all to himself. Slide and patriotic songs always were Mr Edwards' specialty (TT: May 1916, n. pag).

TED GABRIEL

Clay's stage manager (ca.1914-1929). Edward Gabriel, another long-time employee of Harry Clay's, was very much a Newtown Bridge Theatre identity, being associated with that venue for almost the entire period it was operated by Clay's. Gabriel is known to have continued at the theatre at least up until the end of 1930.

Often Referred to as "Handsome Ted," Ted Gabriel was often referred to by many in the industry ("they are all handsome at Clay's" an Australian Variety scribe once wrote), was with little doubt the most popular employee at the Newtown Bridge Theatre according to any within the industry. This was not only for the capable manner in which he organised and "put on" the shows for Harry Clay, but primarily for his agreeable disposition, (mentioned quite often in the pages of the trade journals over the years). Gabriel, whose duties were considerable, was said in 1914 to have had "a personality that will win everyone's regards. He is ever attentive, and most obliging, and the Bridge Theatre are most fortunate in securing such a steady, good fellow as Ted" (AV: 11 Nov. 1914, n. pag.). He stayed on at the Bridge Theatre after it was leased to Harry Kitching in 1930, being mentioned in a report by the NSW Fire Brigade as being the manager on duty when a small fire broke out in the stage area of the theatre.

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- Ted Gabriel is an acrobat all right. At the Bridge Theatre - where, by the way, he is a permanent fixture - he strolls into the orchestral well, and putting one hand on to the stage he is the next moment up there on both feet. Amazing is the ease and agility with which he appears to get about in his duties as a stage-hand. Mr Gabriel strikes one as being able, when the occasion requires it, to do the work of just about six ordinary men (TT: Dec. 1914, 39).
 - The Handsome Ted (they are all handsome at Clay's) is doing splendid work for the firm lately. He is one of the best dispositioned men we have met, and also knows all there is to be known about the business. He is immensely popular with artistes playing the Bridge Theatre (AV: 6 June 1917, 9).
 - Some actor: Ted Gabriel got a chance to distinguish himself when Lester Brown put him into a sketch at the Bridge Theatre. Years to come, when Ted is being interviewed by the great dailies, he will tell of the wonderful success he made in the day gone by (AV: Oct. 1917, n. pag.).

DICK HEANEY

Doorman/usher/Randwick Racecourse gatekeeper/house manager/singer. Employed for over 37 years at Randwick as a gate-keeper and associated with Harry Clay for some 30 years.

Described in 1922 as "right-Bower to Harry Clay" (E: 11 Jan. 1922, 20), Dick Heaney was reportedly "one of the best-known and popular gate-keepers at Randwick, where he... enjoyed an uninterrupted engagement for thirty-seven years." Australian Variety wrote further that "Mr Heaney has been intermittently associated with Mr Clay for a period of twenty-five years" (15 Apr. 1920, 3).

Equally well-known at the Bridge Theatre, the popular, stout gentleman (Heaney was reportedly some 17 stone), was installed as House Manager in 1918. Australian Variety noted that "the management could not have made a better judgment. He handles the large audience on Saturday's and week nights in a most capable manner, and finds seats for them when it seems impossible" (4 Oct. (1918): 12).

Despite his reputation for handling all classes of trouble should it be required, Heaney was reportedly a quiet and tactful man. And in addition to this role with Clay's, he was also on occasions called upon to deputise for any singing turns which failed to make it to a performance.

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- Dick Heaney is going to make application to the Lord Mayor to endeavour to have the corner of Park and Pitt Streets (the Victoria Picture Theatre side) christened "Nip Corner," which is little wonder, as all the "bums" and "dead-beats" in creation seem to "work" this particular spot, and it would be a fine thing if the police got a move on and "vagged" some of these pests, who are sometimes confused with the large number of inoffensive pros (AV: 18 July 1917, n. pag)
 - A real singer - Dick Heaney is one of Clay's right-hand men. Furthermore, he has a voice, but few know it. Last week he deputised for a performer at a concert, when he sang "Mother Machree" and "When Irish Eyes are Smiling." In response to several recalls, he sang "Turn Back the Pickle-factory and Give me Yesterday" (AV: 1 Feb. 1918, n. pag).
 - Dick Heaney is a well-known figure at Newtown, and very popular with the patrons of the Bridge Theatre. Dick has never any trouble with the audience. If there should, however, happen to be a little row, Dick has only to come in, and like magic, there is quietness. A tactful fellow, he knows his work in handling all classes. Dick, by the way, goes about sixteen stone so no one will take the risk! (AV: 15 Feb. 1918, n. pag.).

ANDY KERR

Bookmaker/Theatre Owner and Lessee/Vaudeville Entrepreneur. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland ca.1886. Known as the "Coogee Bunyip" in later years he started out as a telegraph operator on the N.B. Railway at age 12 before emigrating to Australia ca.1901. He soon became involved in the horse racing game, initially as a bookie, and later also as an owner. In 1917 Kerr became the manager of Australian Variety, in addition to taking over the management of the Boomerang Theatre, Coogee. He partnered Harry Sadler as a director at the Gaiety Theatre (Oxford St) in late 1918, becoming the manager in mid-1919 upon Sadler's death. Following this he joined forces with Harry Clay to run the Gaiety from around late 1919.

Andy Kerr, the Coogee "Bunyip," was renowned throughout Australia as the "Longest Odds Bettor in the World," and apparently received more unsolicited commendation from the sporting press and public than all the other turf agents combined (AV: 8 Set 1915, 16). Having arrived in Australia as a 15 year old, with his previous experience only as a telegraph operator for the N.B. Railway, Kerr immediately interested himself in the racing industry, starting as a fledgling bookie on the "Outer" before eventually graduating from this unenviable position to the "Flat" and from there to the "Ledger" and finally to the "Paddock," where he achieved considerable fame and fortune. According to newspapers of the day Kerr revolutionised betting in Australia by offering £100 to £1,000 to 1 straight-out on a pony event. By 1915 he had a small army of clerks, bag holders and bodyguards, and in 1916 at Flemington the Sun recorded that in doing a "roaring business... it was impossible to get near him. Sight-seers obstructed those who wished to speculate" (AV: 12 Apr. 1916, advert. n. pag.).

In April 1917 Kerr became the Manager of Australian Variety and Show World in partnership with Editor Martin C. Brennan. Sometime later that year he expanded his business interests when he became the Managing Director of the Boomerang Theatre, Coogee, a 1500 seat venue presenting both film and vaudeville, and carrying a full orchestra. The following year, in early December, Kerr joined forces with Harry Sadler, taking on the role of Director at the Gaiety Theatre, in Oxford Street, and being heavily involved in the theatre's renovations. It is understood that Kerr looked after the business affairs while Sadler involved himself in the day to day running of the theatre and the organisation of the artists.

In 1919, following Sadler's death, Kerr took over the management of the Gaiety on his own for some months before joining up with Harry Clay, who had been providing artists for the theatre from around the beginning of the year. It is apparent that he became an official partner with Kerr in October. While Clay's association with the Gaiety is the most well-known, the theatre was in fact known for several years as Kerr's Gaiety. He is believed to have continued on in management positions with both the Gaiety and Australian Variety well into the 1920s.

Apart from his varied business interests, Kerr was involved quite liberally in many charities, "his beneficence [being] a by-word within the Sydney community... For the war and patriotic funds alone he has given close on £1,000, and he has never yet been known to turn a deaf ear to any legitimate appeal in the cause of charity" (AV: 19 Apr. 1916, n. pag.). He is also known to have, on occasion, graced the stage in cameo appearances, one such event causing Australian Variety to report that "Mr Kerr nightly receives an ovation. And he deserves it!... His little part is done without the least affectation. He comes on keenly, speaks clearly, and moves easily and naturally" (9 May 1917, n. pag.).

As with many of the other artists and managers who have been included in this Appendix section, much remains to be found with regard to Andy Kerr's later career. It is not known, for instance, when he relinquished his hold on the Gaiety Theatre. Indeed, his relationship with both Clay's and Australian Variety require further investigation in order to establish the extent and length of his involvement. As to his career as a leading Australian bookmaker, this too remains unknown.

- His long odds prices up to as much as 2000 to 1 on a straight-out pony event makes the Grabbing Tote blush (Mudgee Guardian - qtd AV: 31 Mar. 1915, 2).
- The only man in the world who lays and pays £1,000 to £1 straight-out on day race (Sportsman - qtd AV: 8 Sept. 1915, 16).

The Coogee Bunyip

King of the fielders is he,
Odds that are longest he'll lay.
Gets through his work in a trice,
Finds it a pleasure to pay.

Randwick will find him this week,
Look for his stand - ninety-nine.
Where he'll do business with all-
Taking your quidlets and mine.

Andy's a mighty fine "sport,"
Foremost in doing good turns.
Sticks, like a brick, to his pals,
Just go and ask Charlie Byrnes.

That's why the Bunyip's well-liked,
Friends he has got in galore.
May he keep going as now,
Each week will bring dozens more.

(AV: 29 Sept. 1915, n. pag)

- The man from Coogee did an enormous business. He told the punters that any money he misses throwing into his men's bags they could have. Needless to say, he missed nothing (Table Talk - qtd AV: 12 Apr. 1916, n. pag).
- He writes tickets and handles money faster than any man seen in Victoria. The clients round his ring were often ten deep (Judge - qtd AV: 12 Apr. 1916, n. pag).
- What the May issue of the Theatre magazine says of the "Coogee Bunyip" as an actor: Andy Kerr in his few lines has simply to be Andy Kerr. Whilst Mr Kerr is the on the stage you realise more fully than ever how completely Mr MacDonald fails to get the sporting touch.... Mr Kerr nightly receives an ovation. And he deserves it! He is giving his services, wholly out of friendship for Mr Drew, and with no other object than helping along a good cause. His little part is done without the least affectation. He comes on keenly, speaks clearly, and moves easily and naturally. Mr Kerr is just giving a study that would be the despair of many a professional actor (AV: 9 May 1917, n. pag.).

STAN KERRIDGE

Baritone/character vocalist/manager, NBT. Stanford Kerridge is first known to have been associated with Harry Clay when he toured Queensland in 1907 as a baritone and specialist illustrated singer. He again toured in 1910. One of the country's leading character vocalists he was, however, forced to retire in 1912 due to health problems which affected his voice production. He is believed to have spent much of the next 10 years involved in various commercial interests, before returning to the entertainment industry as a manager for Harry Clay at the Bridge Theatre, Newtown. He remained with the company until it closed in late 1929.

As with so many artists and people involved in vaudeville, much of Stan Kerridge's life remains unknown. The first reference found regarding his career is his association with Harry Clay's 1907 Queensland Waxworks and Comedy Co tour, in which he performed as a singer. Along with Wally Edwards and May Reade, he was one of the specialist illustrated song artists. The Northern Miner of that year describes one of his turns thus: "Mr Stan Kerridge's best was 'Like the Rose you're the Fairest Flower,' with beautiful dissolving effects, the rosebud slowly opening to the perfect flower" (30 May 1907, 5). He again toured the northern state in 1910. During this later period Kerridge had begun to build a reputation as one of the country's leading character vocalists, until a severe nasal problem forced his permanent retirement from the stage in 1912/13. In December of 1913 he was given a benefit at St George's Hall, Newtown, organised by Bert Howard.

While it is not clear as to what Kerridge did during the next 10 years, Everyone's in 1925 indicates that he had been "engaged in commercial pursuits" for some time (28 Jan. 1925, 32). In December of 1924, he returned to the entertainment industry, taking on the managerial role at the Bridge Theatre, Newtown, after the death of the previous manager, Jimmy Boyle. Kerridge is known to have stayed on with the company until it folded its operations in late 1929.

Stan Kerridge, according to a number of reports (and as seems to be the case with most of Harry Clay's other managers) was well-liked and respected for his reliability and professionalism. An incident in 1925, in which Rosie Rifle, a sharp-shooting artist, ran a ramrod through her hand at the Bridge Theatre, was noted in Everyone's. Kerridge's prompt assistance, and knowledge of first aid, which he had apparently studied, reportedly prevented serious complications from setting in (4 Mar. 1925, 32).

Whether Kerridge stayed on at the Bridge Theatre after the company leased it to H.R. Kitching in late 1929 is unknown. However, a NSW Fire Brigade report indicates that by December 1930, the theatre's manager was Bill Sadler, and so it can be assumed that he may well have left sometime during or shortly after Clay's closed its Newtown operations.

HAROLD T. MORGAN

Business partner/solicitor/J.P./alderman/mayor. A prominent Sydney solicitor and businessman, Harold Thomas Morgan was also an Alderman, representing the Enmore Ward in the Newtown Council from around 1891, becoming Mayor in 1895, 1902, 1907-1910, 1918-1920. In addition he acted as a Notary Public and Commissioner for Affidavits for New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland. In 1912, he and fellow businessman A.R. Abbott joined with Harry Clay to form the Bridge Theatre Co which built the Newtown Bridge Theatre. He remained a silent partner until at least the time of Clay's death in 1925, and is believed to have remained so for a number of years after. Two sons, Alfred T. and Harold E. Morgan also became solicitors, the latter handling the affairs of Catherine Clay up until her death in the early 1960s.

While there remains quite a deal more to be established with regard to Harold T. Morgan and his career, his association with Harry Clay seems to have been a long and fruitful one. The earliest record of his involvement in the entrepreneur's career and personal life is in the handling of the Clays' purchase of 218 Glebe Point Road. Whether or not he was one of several people to finance Clay's early career ca.1901, when the entrepreneur initially began running his Queensland tours is unknown. But it is likely that they did indeed begin an association around this time. Morgan was already an established legal name Sydney as well as being an alderman in Newtown. He also took on the role of Mayor for the first time in 1895. Around this period, too, Harry Clay's

managerial career in Newtown was also bringing him to the fore in terms of public recognition. Morgan's business address for some time was:

Harold T. Morgan & Sons
Solicitors and Notaries
74 Pitt Street (btw Martin Pl and Hunter St)
PO Box 195 G.P.O.

One son, Alfred T. Morgan: BA. LL.B was both a solicitor and Commissioner for Affidavits for South Australia, Tasmania, and Fiji, while another, Harold E. Morgan, (also a solicitor) became Commissioner for Affidavits for New Zealand and the Western Pacific. The only anecdotal reference to Morgan in any of the trade magazines found so far is in 1917, when Australian Variety records:

Harold Morgan, an alderman for Enmore for many years, and one of the directors of Clay's Bridge Theatre Ltd was very much in evidence with his gorgeous motor car during the week, giving artists a lift home after the show. Making as he did, a special trip of it each evening, shows thoughtfulness to an extent which will be long remembered by many, and for which too much thanks cannot be given him. The car, it might be mentioned, is one of the best in Australia (AV: 15 Aug. 1917, n. pag).

BILL SADLER

Manager/performer. Brother of Harry Sadler, William started out as a doorman for his brother at the Princess ca.1916-17, and around the same time as a performer on Harry Clay's circuit. In 1918 he became the manager of the Coliseum Theatre, North Sydney, and later handled similar positions in a number of Clay's theatres, including the Bridge Theatre Newtown, and Princess Theatre in the city. After his long engagement with Clay's, Sadler spent some considerable time with the Tivoli organisation as House Manager. His great claim to fame in Australian theatre history, however, was his role in suggesting the name "Mo" for Roy Rene and Nat Phillips' partnership as Stiffy and Mo (recognised as one of Australia's greatest comic partnerships). In turn the name "Mo" became the signature identity for Australian theatre's yearly honour, the Mo Award. Sadler is known to have continued with Clay's as a manager until the company folded, and then worked on at the theatre as manager for a period of time during the early 1930s, including Harry Kitching's time at the theatre.

Little has yet been found with regard to Bill Sadler's earlier life, (as with his brother Harry) other than they are known to have had two other brothers, Victor and Sid. Bill is believed, however, to have started out in theatre sometime prior to or during 1916 with Harry Clay on his Sydney suburban circuit as a performer. Charles Norman, who knew Sadler well, records in When Vaudeville Was King that Sadler had "been a performer touring with the Harry Clay circuit... [and that he came from the same school of thinking as Clay] so they learnt their values well" (245).

In 1916, after his brother Harry had taken on the Princess Theatre management for the Fullers, it is believed that Bill became doorman/cum house manager/cum actor, at the venue. Australian Variety recorded in 1916 that "Bill Sadler, brother to manager Harry (of the Princess Theatre) is becoming particularly useful in the farces played at the George Street vaudeville house. One of these days William will be gazetted as a regular actor" (6 Sept. 1916, 7). Around this time, Bill Sadler made his mark in Australian theatre history by giving the newly formed partnership of Roy Rene and Nat Phillips its name. Rene required a stage name to compliment Phillips' "Stiffy" character, and being at a loss, Sadler, according to Rene, is supposed to have said, "Why don't you call yourselves Stiffy and Mo?" (Rene 62-63).

Sadler's reliability and work ethic brought him much praise throughout his career, aspects which Harry Clay also recognised from the start. He was still house manager at the Princess for his brother at the time Clay took over the lease in early 1918, retaining his position there under the new management. After successfully taking over the reins of the theatre while Clay was away in Western Australia, he was given the job of running the Coliseum Theatre in North Sydney, after that venue's manager, Jimmy Boyle, took on the responsibilities for Eden Gardens Theatre at Manly. Australian Variety reported Sadler's first week as the Coliseum's new manager, noting that he "must have been pleased with himself last Saturday night. It was his first night as manager...., and it was a record house, no doubt due to the fine manner in which Will had the district billed during the week" (11 Oct. 1918, 13).

Sadler remained at the Coliseum for many years and later managed the Bridge Theatre in the last days of its operations under the Clay banner. He stayed on in the same position for Harry Kitching for an undetermined period, and is known to have been associated with the theatre at least until December 1930, having been recorded in a NSW Fire Brigade report as the manager at that time. During the 1930s he had a long-time association with the Opera House/Tivoli Theatre, apparently becoming something of a Sydney theatrical landmark. He is, for example, known to have gone into partnership with a south coast entrepreneur by the name of Boland, who owned the Wollongong theatre which Harry Clay had used for his shows for a number of years. Sadler and Boland leased the Opera House for some time, running their own shows there to some success. He was also at one stage heavily involved with the careers of Queenie Paul and Mike Connors, being induced by the pair to join forces with their new set up. Charles Norman records that it was said of Bill around this time that:

[He] pasted his shares [in the company] inside his bowler hat - and very sensible. He had heard there was a big-take-over taking place. Bill then assigned himself as stage doorkeeper and sat pat until the right price came up for his shares. He remembered his training with the bag-carrying Harry Clay. I'm told that Bill never raised his hat to a soul during the take-over time (246-247).

Sadler, according to Norman, raised "a fine family, mostly boys, and one, Ray, became the treasurer for the Shovel for years. Some of the others entered show business" (247).

In his day [Bill] Sadler had been a performer touring with the Harry Clay [NSW country and suburban] circuit. Mr Clay himself was a shrewd showman. When travelling through the country with his shows you would see this significant figure in front of the theatre or hall with a bookmaker's bag slung over his shoulder, taking the money and giving the necessary tickets. Harry trusted no man. Bill Sadler came from the same school of thinking. So they learnt their values well (Norman 246).

ALEC STAGPOOLE

Vaudeville performer/scenic artist/set designer. Alec Stagpoole was for several years part of a family act known as The Stagpooles. He retired from the stage around 1915 to become a scenic artist, principally with Harry Clay, where his studio resided at the rear of the Newtown Bridge Theatre. He was also a freelance stage and set designer. His daughters Ula and Elvie were also vaudeville performers, with Elvie in particular being well-known as a solo artist and in partnership with her husband Charles "Ike" Delavale. His brother Ted, was a partner with Alec in the original Stagpooles lineup, and is known to have toured America around 1917/18.

Alec Stagpoole's early career is another unknown, apart from the fact that he and his brother Ted formed the nucleus of a family act which also included Madge Stagpoole. They are recorded as having returned to New Zealand with the Fullers in 1907 after an absence of some three years, and are known to have been still performing in 1915, playing an engagement at the National Theatre (Syd). Australian Variety noted that "their well-remembered act is meeting with great success. As before, the wonderful acrobatic ability of Ted Stagpoole is the big laugh maker" (17 Mar. 1915, n. pag). The troupe is believed to have adapted its act on occasions, being billed variously as the Three, or the Four Stagpooles, in addition to just simply, the Stagpooles. They are also known to have played all the major centres in Australia, and for both the Tivoli and Fuller organisations. Not all reports of the act were kind, however, as a 1915 review indicates. "The Four Stagpooles have the most idiotic and ridiculous sketch ever played in vaudeville. If a good team like this is going to pull this kind of hash, well they ought to enlist" (AV: 17 Feb. 1915, 9).

Alec Stagpoole retired from the stage sometime in 1915 in order to take on duties as Harry Clay's resident scenic artist. As with many vaudeville performers, versatility was a prerequisite for maintaining any semblance of a career. Alec is not the only Stagpoole to have had artistic abilities, as his brother Ted is believed to have involved himself in scenic building, too. A 1907 account reports that he burnt himself severely on the head, face and hands with melted glue at the Auckland Opera House, but with no permanent injury expected.

In so far as Alec is concerned, however, he almost immediately came in for praise for his work, with Australian Variety making comment towards his work shortly after he began his engagement as Clay's scenic artist.

Alex Stagpoole was responsible for the excellent scenery at Harry Clay's Bridge Theatre on Saturday night last. The stage looked better than it ever looked before, and was well worth the trouble spent. Alex is turning out some first-class work at his studio, in the Bridge Theatre, and any artists requiring additions to their act in the way of scenery or props should lose no time in seeing Alex Stagpoole (24 Nov. 1915, 17).

Stagpoole's work also saw him designing settings for commercial companies like Grace Brothers (AV: 27 Oct. 1915, n. pag.) and private organisations such as W. Yinson Lee, organiser of a 1916 Chinese procession in Sydney (TT: Apr. 1916, 32), in addition to his work with Clay's and individual artists. By 1916 Stagpoole was being assisted by one of his daughters Eululie [sic], and had invented a fire-proof scenery known as "Noburn" (AV: 9 Dec. 1916, n. pag.) which was passed by the Metropolitan Fire Board. Another invention was his system of utilising scenery to advantage by allowing it to be folded up into small sections without affecting the material (AV: 31 May 1916, 9).

While details regarding Stagpoole's career from around 1920 remain unclear, he is known to have continued in Clay's employment up until at least the mid 1920s, Charles Norman recalling him being at the Bridge Theatre during his own career with the company. Stagpoole was apparently well respected for his work with vaudeville scenery and props, being known to have designed equipment for some of the leading acts in Sydney during his career, including Leonard Nelson and Jim Romaine.

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- Alex Stagpoole is kept quite busy at his studio at Clay's Bridge Theatre, Newtown, and is turning out some first-class work. He has just finished making and fitting up a stage for Grace Bros., Ltd. Anyone wishing to add to the tone of their act, Alex will be pleased to hear from them, as he is sure he has something that will suit you (AV: 27 Oct. 1915, n. pag.).

- Alex Stagpoole, the scenic artists, is now specialising in "dye work," a new system of utilising scenery to advantage. This latest invention allows the scenery to be folded up very small, and does not affect material. A trip to Clay's Bridge Theatre, Newtown would be well worth the visit, particularly to those who desire new scenery at a minimum of cost (AV: 31 May 1916, 9).
- Eululie [sic]¹ Stagpoole [Alex's] daughter is an able assistant doing most of the designing and painting of the scenery. Some of her work is seen in the appearance of a huge Xmas Cake on the opening this week. Alex is the inventor of "Noburn," the fire proof scenery (AV: 29 Dec. 1916, n. pag.).
- * Alex Stagpoole is responsible for the drop-curtain which Leonard Nelson has in use at the Majestic Theatre. Any artists thinking of adding to their offering should consult Alex, he has some excellent and original ideas (AV: 25 July 1917, 3).

CLAUDE E. WEBB

Advance Rep/film and theatre manager/theatre lessee/journalist. Born in Launceston (Tasmania), Webb became involved in the entertainment industry at age 17 as Treasurer for the Lynch Family of Bellringers. Three years later he became Alfred Dampier's Advance Rep, followed by a similar position with Charles Holloway. He later toured the USA with Olga Nethersole before returning to Australia where he established himself as one of the leading Advance Reps in the country. In 1909 Webb was engaged by Harry Clay to prepare the way for Walter Bentley's Queensland tour, and in 1914 is known to have spent some time in Brisbane looking after the interests of the George Willoughby Dramatic Co and Kings Dramatic Co. In later years he settled in Adelaide where he became the city's leading picture and theatre house manager, running at first the York Theatre, and around the 1930s, the Strand and Lyric theatres.

Perhaps one of the best-known, if not one of the most respected Advance Reps and Picture showmen in the early decades of the twentieth century, Claude Webb's career began at age 17 working on the Lynch Family's Victorian tour. He was then engaged by Alfred Dampier as an Advance Rep for his Dramatic Co. He later he toured the USA for a period of some four or five years with Olga Nethersole, before taking an absence of leave to travel through Alaska and the Yukon with a team of fur buyers.

On returning to Australia Webb again found engagements as an Advance Rep, taking on the responsibility for Harry Clay's Walter Bentley tour of Queensland in 1909. Around 1914 he was to handle the affairs of George Willoughby's Dramatic Co. and King's Dramatic Co. during their Queensland/Brisbane seasons. Webb eventually made a name for himself in Adelaide, where he spent some considerable time managing a number of picture houses and theatres in that city, up until at least the early 1930s. He is also known to have contributed articles to several trade journals during his career, including one for an Adelaide paper in 1925, on the US picture industry as seen through an Australian's eyes.

JAMES H. WHITE

Theatrical agent/journalist/vaudeville entrepreneur. "Whitie," as he was most often referred to, began his career as a burgeoning entrepreneur before establishing himself as a journalist. He later combined both careers, notably as a theatrical agent operating out of the offices of Australian Variety around 1915-16, in addition to being employed as a journalist for the magazine with his regular column "Whitie." He became a manager for Harry Clay's Vaudeville Enterprises in 1916, running the business out of Clay's offices in the city. White continued as a theatrical agent throughout the 1920s, and joined forces with Bert Howard around 1928/29.

White's early life and career are unclear at this time, however, he is known to have entered into management around 1902. He put together a company for shows at Liverpool on the outskirts of Sydney, where he said he had "secured a financier (a Greek waiter) with a Fiver" and with which he proceeded to "select a company of a dozen... next securing 500 two-coloured day bills, [and] putting the same out at Liverpool, where [he] had booked the hall for a Tuesday night two weeks hence." With his financier pulling out a few days prior to the show, and having spent his last 10/- on dodgers, White apparently still needed to find the fares to get his company to the show. "Never at any previous or subsequent period in my life" wrote White, "do I ever recollect feeling quite so miserable." To add to his woes a circus had turned up unannounced in the township bringing unwanted competition to his first foray as a showman. In the end, however, a severe storm developed into tornado type conditions, ripping the circus tents to shreds and allowing White's show to catch the locals to himself. The end result was a house record, cash profit in his pocket, and a greater desire to continue in the business (AV: 17 Jan. 1917, n. pag).

White later began to make his mark as both a young manager, and a writer for the Hawklet, being its Sydney representative. "In addition to representing James Donnelly's tabloid companies," noted Australian Variety in 1914, "he is the sole agent for the Musical Gardiners and other acts" (19 Aug. 1914, 6). Initially he operated his small entrepreneurial business at 183 Pitt Street, sending acts to various managements such as the Szarka Brothers at their Enmore Theatre. By 1915 White was conducting business through the Australian Variety Booking Agency, in partnership with editor Martin C. Brennan. White's clients included at

¹ Eululie, most likely this is a misprint for Eulalie

this time T.M Halls Lyric Theatre, Goulburn; R.L Baker's Stadium, Rushcutters Bay; Thornton's Mascot Theatre, Rosebury; and Harry Clay's Bridge Theatre, Newtown.

In early 1916 White had established a business relationship with artist/manager Joe Lashwood, the organisation being known as the Lashwood-White Theatrical Booking Agency, with operations having expanded quite considerably. However, in August 1916 he accepted an offer from Harry Clay to become manager of Clay's newly opened theatrical booking agency. The Clay/White relationship was to continue for a number of years. In 1921, and under his management, the agency's name was changed to the Australian Theatrical Bureau. It is not known whether Harry Clay continued his association past this point or not. It had for some time, though, been referred to unofficially as "White's Agency." It is unlikely, however, that Clay would have ceased his involvement in the venture prior to his stroke in 1925 as by all accounts it had continued to be the major source of vaudeville supply for both artists and companies requiring their services well into the mid 1920s.

During the 1920s as well as his agency operations White also continued to turn his hand to management running shows at several theatres including, in 1925, the Strand Theatre, Leichhardt. By the late 1920s (around 1928/29) White joined forces with Bert Howard, managing his Sydney circuit while the "Droll" was recuperating from a serious illness.

APPENDIX F

SELECTED BIOGRAPHIES OF ARTISTS OF SIGNIFICANCE WHO WERE ASSOCIATED WITH HARRY CLAY'S COMPANY

NB: All artists in this appendix have had their entries updated and expanded for the 2005 Ph D thesis "What Oh Tonight). See Appendix D (<http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:107238>). The same artists' entries in the Australian Variety Theatre Archive are being updated whenever new information is identified. See <http://ozvta.com/> (or at Pandora: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-143747>)

The following biographies deal primarily with each individual's career during the period that Harry Clay operated his theatrical organisation – this being primarily the years 1900-1930. Only brief details relating to a person's career prior to or after this period are presented.

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The artists above represent a sample of performers who were highly popular during their careers, and who spent some time on Harry Clay's circuits. Even a brief survey of those considered to have had significant associations with Clay would take up considerably more space within this appendix that can be afforded. Some of the names of those who have had to be left out of this appendix, but who were as well known or just highly regarded as many of those presented could include the following:

Joe Archer	Elton Black	Fred Bluett	Peter Brooks	Brull and Hemsley	Harry Cash
Harry Coyle	Ernest Crawford	George Crotty	Bert Corrie	Maude Courtney	James Caldwell
Marshall Crosby	Joe Charles	Denis Carney	Eileen Capell	Vince Courtney	Carlton Chase
Carlton and Sutton	Billy Cass	Driscoll Bros	Bruce Drysdale	George Drew	Bert Dudley
Louie Duggan	Bert Desmond	George Edwards	Lulu Eugene	Arthur Elliott	Alf. Edwards
Eileen Fleury	Ford and Davis	Frank Gorman	Sadie Gale	Reg Greenwood	Ted Herbert
Frank Herbert	Nat Hanley	Trixie Ireland	Ida Jarvis	Essie Jennings	Clara Keating
Jack Kearns	Joe Lashwood	Ward Lear	Harry Little	Max Martin	Cass Mahomet
Billy Maloney	Carlton Max	Con Moreni	Ida Merton	"Hats" McKay	Charles Norman
Leonard Nelson	The Newmans	Hector Napier	Masie Posner	Ernest Pitcher	Maude Perman
Olga Pennington	Dinks Patterson	George Pagden	John Ralston	Jimmy Romaine	Will Rollow
The Rhodesburies	Will Raynor	Joe Rox	Harry Ross	Wal Rockley	Les Shipp
George Sharrett	Ted Stanley	The Three Starrs	Reg Thornton	Dan Thomas	Lyla Thompson
Tilton and West	Vaude and Verne	Lily Vockler	Ern Vockler	Redhead Wilson	George Ward
Will Wynand					

DELAVALLE AND GILBERT

Ern M. Delavale and Will Gilbert: - sketch and comic patter team. Gilbert was renowned for his ultra thin and very lanky appearance, thus often billed the "Loose Legged Comedian," and "the Human Hairpin." He began working with Ern Delavale on the Harry Clay circuit sometime around 1909, the pair touring Queensland that year and again in 1912 and 1916. As a partnership they were one of the more successful touring Australia and New Zealand, and are known to have played engagements in India and New Zealand during their time together. In 1916 the pair parted ways, with Gilbert teaming up with his wife Dora. The Gilberts were a highly popular act on Clay's circuit (as well as for most of the other vaudeville organisations), working regularly for the company until around 1921. They are also recorded as appearing on the circuit as late as 1926. Ern Delavale, the "robust one" was for some time the Vice President of the Australian Variety Artists' Federation, and became a vaudeville entrepreneur with his own Sydney circuit ca.1914/15. Married to Lily Vockler, Delavale also worked a vaudeville turn with her, although arguably his greatest success in later years was his partnership with her brother Ern Vockler (renowned for his Charlie Chaplin impersonations). The three toured for the Fullers for three years, and spent some time on the Clay circuit before heading to South Africa and later the UK. Both Ern Delavale and Lily Vockler remained there for several years before returning to Australia in the mid-1920s to work a further two years on the Clay circuit, in addition to engagements with the Tivoli and Fuller companies.

As a vaudeville team, Will Gilbert and Ern Delavale were accorded star status during their reasonably long partnership. Although it is not yet known when they first started working together, it may well have been around the time of their first association with Harry Clay in 1909. Individually and as a duo they worked for all the major vaudeville organisations in the Australasian regions, with Will Gilbert creating merry havoc among audiences with his outrageous contortions and immensely comic physical shape. As the Theatre noted in 1909: "his twistings are simply marvellous, and he appeared more like a streak of India-rubber than a human being" (16 Mar. 1909, 3) Very often the headline act with the companies they were engaged by, the pair seldom performed without numerous recalls, and were without doubt one of the most popular attractions of Harry Clay's Queensland tours.

In 1913 Delavale and Gilbert toured Queensland as the headline Australian act for Sam Langford (the "Boston Tar Baby"). On that tour, too, was Lily Vockler, Ern Delavale's wife. In early 1914 the pair, by now billed as "Australia's Leading Comedy Merchants and Laughter Experts," accepted an engagement in India through Fullers. Upon their return to Australia in July, Delavale was forced to work solo for some time when his partner suffered a serious bout of acute sciatica and rheumatism. The following month Delavale resigned his position as Vice President of the A.V.A.F. and began running his own suburban circuit in Sydney, known as The Refined Vaudeville Entertainers, and which for a time became a serious competitor to Harry Clay's circuit. Delavale started off by taking a lease on the National Theatre at Balmain, where he proceeded to capture good audiences through his established reputation and extensive connections within the industry. His circuit later took in Redfern, Coogee, Randwick and Ashfield. Some of the artists he was able to engage were among the best available at the time, with names such as Denis Carney, Lulu Eugene, Bert Desmond, Olga Pennington, Ward Lear, Mark Erickson and The Two Rexos being just a sample. Also with regard to that year, Delavale and his wife lost a child in birth, with Lily being recorded as almost dying from the complications. Around this time, too, he formed an association with Arthur Tauchert. The pair played the Clay circuit for a short while. Although they announced plans to continue as a regular team this does not seem to have eventuated.

In 1915 Delavale and Gilbert were once again performing together, and made an extensive tour of New Zealand with George Stephenson's English Comedy Company. Interestingly they took out an advertisement in Australian Variety stating their intention to "quit vaudeville for the time being... owing to the extensive War Salaries being offered in vaudeville at the time" (11 Aug. 1915, 13). Stephenson apparently engaged the two comics to work their own specialty act throughout the tour. The following year the pair returned to Queensland for Harry Clay, being included in Clay's No 1 Musical Comedy Company touring the South-western line that month. They are also known to have been working on his circuit as late as September that year. After this time, however, there has been little found regarding the two working together.

By 1917 Gilbert had formed a partnership with his wife Dora, and began to attract significant engagements throughout Australia. During that year, too, he appeared in a locally made film, Is Manly Immodest?, which apparently ran for two weeks at a metropolitan cinema (AV: 6 June 1917, n. pag.). The Gilberts enjoyed a long association with Harry Clay's company (being known to have been still appearing on the Sydney circuit as late as 1926). This was in addition to regular appearances between 1917 and 1926 on all the major circuits, including those run by the Fullers and the Tivoli managements. During this period they also became recognised as leading pantomime performers, with Gilbert in particular renowned for his comic appearances - his lanky frame and hysterical gait guaranteeing him instant recognition and laughter with audiences across the country.

Ern Delavale is known to have teamed up with his wife as early as December 1916, with an engagement for Harry Sadler at the Princess Theatre (Syd) being one of the earliest dates found so far. By 1917, however, he had formed a partnership with his wife's brother, Ern Vockler, which was to last for several years, and which arguably matched his successful career with Will Gilbert. Known as The Delavale Brothers, they toured Australia and New Zealand for the Fullers, with Lily appearing in solo turns (and sometimes with her husband), while Ern Vockler began attract increasingly positive reviews for his Charlie Chaplin impersonations. In 1919 the pair was reportedly offered an engagement by Alexander Pantages to tour America, including a three week season in Honolulu. Whether or not this contract was taken up is not yet known. What is known is that Delavale, his wife and brother-in-law sailed for South Africa the following year (1920), where they played a season before heading to London. It seems that the Delavale Bros did not stay together long after their arrival, with reviews and reports indicating that Ern Delavale and Lily Vockler were touring as an act around this time. The couple spent several years in the United Kingdom, although it seems

that they found conditions there rather less fortunate than they had experienced in Australia. As Delavale and Vockler, they remained in the UK for an unknown period, but are believed to have returned to Australia sometime around 1923/24. By 1925 they were once again performing on the Harry Clay circuit (in addition to other organisations), with references to them being on Clay time recorded throughout 1926.

- Will Gilbert, who almost has to stoop to evade the top roof, was responsible for an uproar on his entrance, and was installed as the favourite of the evening. After his humorous rendition of "Come Out of It," he gave one of the greatest exhibitions of leg-screwing that has ever been witnessed in Toowoomba, and swept the stage with the whole length of his long legs. Until he did this one would have thought that the stage was free from dust (TC: 20 July 1909, 3).
- Delavale and Gilbert are both patriotic and original. Their naval scene, "Sydney Harbour, a view from a Battleship," [at the National Amphitheater] is beautifully arranged; and the whole turn is bright and topical (TT: Nov. 1909, 22)
- Ern Delavale, the successful suburban manager, placed before the audience a grand double bill, the equal of which has never been seen around the suburbs. Twenty-two performers took part in the entertainment.... Speaking to the proprietor, he assures me that all the members of the orchestra, staff and performers are unionists. Without a doubt, it is a city show with suburban prices (AV: 21 Oct. 1914, 7)
- Harry Clay has a grafter in Will Gilbert. He appears throughout the first part in the revue A Mix-up at Manly; does a lengthy turn with his wife in the second half; and is seen again in the farce, "The Telephonograph." Mr Gilbert is a source of laughter all the time he's on stage. He opens big, goes big, and closes big..... Has a bigger freak, or bigger shriek, than Will Gilbert ever been seen at the Bridge Theatre? (TT: May 1917, 44).

• **At Harry Clay's Newtown Bridge Theatre:-**

Mr Delavale (*handing Mr Gilbert a postcard*): That is "Venus in the Bath."

Mr Gilbert: (*taking the card, and looking at it*): Yes?

Mr Delavale: Of course you can see very little of her. The water is up to her neck.

Mr Gilbert continues looking at the picture, evidently with no thought of handing the card back to Mr Delavale.

Mr Delavale: (*reaching for it*): Give it to me.

Mr Gilbert: No, I'm waiting.

Mr Delavale: Waiting for what?

Mr Gilbert: Waiting for the water to run out.

(TT: Mar. 1916, 46)

- Will Gilbert [as Lord Helpus] in Red Riding Hood, another Fullers pantomime at the Newtown Majestic: Always admired as an eccentric comedian - he's over 6ft high, well on the thin side and sinuous as an eel - Mr Gilbert has opportunities as the companion of the dame which he so makes use of as to have the audiences in convulsions of laughter (TT: Mar. 1920, 9).

CHARLES "IKE" DELAVALLE

Comic/Hebrew and Chaplin characterisations/eccentric dancer/revue and pantomime actor/producer Clay's manager. "Ike," as he was most often called, was associated with Harry Clay for some eight years prior to joining the Fullers in 1928. In 1920 he began appearing in Perth with Paul Stanthorpe (ex American Burlesque Co, ca.1913), with the pair billed as "Spike and Ike." In that year, too, he married fellow vaudevillian Elvie Stagpoole. The two teamed up in 1921 to form the act Delavale and Stagpoole, playing with the Walter George Revue Company in addition to regular engagements with Harry Clay and the Fullers. Over the rest of the decade they worked every major circuit either as individuals or as a duo. By 1925 Delavale had become one of Harry Clay's major attractions, and the following year began producing his own revues and pantomimes for Clay's under the banner of the Ike Delavale Revue Co. Delavale left Clay's in 1928 taking up a long engagement producing revues with Fullers. Charles Delavale is not related to Ern Delavale.

While little is yet known about Charles Delavale's life and career prior to 1920, it has been recorded that he was not related to Ern M. Delavale. The first reviews of "Ike's" performances found during the research for this thesis occur in 1920 when he is mentioned as appearing at the Clay-run Gaiety Theatre with Chaplin makeup. A few months later he was recorded as appearing at the Shaftesbury Theatre in Perth (WA) in a programme which included Miss Elvie Stagpoole (daughter of Alec Stagpoole, Harry Clay's scenic artist and ex-performer), and whom he married in October that year. Miss Stagpoole had been a vaudeville dancer and singer (she also played the ukulele) since early childhood, and is said to have begun her stage career with her father and sisters. She is believed to have appeared on the Clay circuit as a solo artist around 1915/16. By the end of 1916 she was creating a great deal of interest with her solo dance in The Bunyip pantomime at the Grand Opera House, which also starred Nellie Kolle.

Soon after their marriage it seems that the couple began working on stage in the partnership, billed naturally enough as Delavale and Stagpoole, and which they first tried out on the Clay circuit. In early 1921 they accepted an engagement to appear with the

Walter George Revue Company, opening in Adelaide in May, and followed this with a contract on the Fuller circuit both as individual turns and as a duo. Their places in the Walter George troupe were taken by Jim Gerald and Essie Jennings. Fred Parsons records that around this time, and while working on the Fuller circuit, Charles Delavale had taken to wearing make-up of a very similar kind to that of Roy Rene. According to Parsons Mo was "explosively indignant." "The dirty mug has knocked off me make-up, pal," said the comic. "Strike me lucky, you'd think the mug could be original in something, wouldn't you?" (3)¹. Parsons records that in later years Rene reminded him of it whenever he had the chance. Parsons also notes that Delavale eventually developed into a good character actor instead of a third-rate comedian.

Delavale and Stagpoole continued to appear on the Clay circuit during 1921, and in 1922 they took up a brief engagement with Bert La Blanc's Revue Company. Both performers continued to attract an increasing popularity with Australian audiences, particularly on the Clay circuit where they worked regularly over the next few years. In 1924 Everyone's wrote of Delavale:

[He] is one of the most entertaining comedians playing around Sydney. His work has now reached such a standard that he could easily discard his ultra-eccentric make-up and work almost straight evening dress (10 Sept. 1924, 34).

Around 1925 Delavale's star quality was such that he began taking on managerial positions with Clay's, including producing. This in turn led him to put together his own troupe of performers, under the banner of Ike Delavale's Revue Company, which began playing the Clay circuit by 1926. That year, too, he put on Clay's highly successful pantomime The Old Woman Who Lived in the Shoe, which played around the circuit, including the Gaiety and Bridge Theatres. From this time on his revues became frequent attractions for Clay's and generally garnered much critical acclaim, as well as huge popularity around the circuit.

By late 1928, and with Maurice Chenoweth having left Clay's for the Fullers camp, Delavale also took up the offer of a contract with that company. As Everyone's records, it was seen by many in the industry as a significant step up in Delavale's career:

Fullers look to have picked another winner for their circuit in comedian Ike Delavale, who lines up with the best of them in the Hebrew type of character work. He made his Sydney bow at Fullers' Theatre with his own revue after much success in Newcastle, Brisbane and Melbourne, and viewed together with a big house last Thursday afternoon there is no doubt of his popularity here also (17 Oct. 1928, n. pag.).

Delavale's revue company around this time included (apart from his wife) Lulla Fanning, the Dudleys, and Charles Megan. His productions were presented right across the Fullers circuit, and by all accounts continued to meet with much success. From 1928 onwards, however, and with there being less advertising and reviews published in the trade magazines (which began increasingly showing greater interest in films) there has been less information found concerning Delavale as part of this dissertation's research. It seems likely, however, that he continued his career into the 1930s as it is believed that he would not have been much past thirty years of age around this time.

-
- Charlie Delavale was rather sore at a par in last week's issue of this religious sheet, wherein he was rebuked for leaving his "corner," on the Gaiety bill before the first part was little more than three-quarter way through, and failed to return. Charlie's explanation, a very sound one by the way, was to the effect that he had to appear early in the second act, and, as his Chaplin make-up takes some considerable time, his early departure from the first half of the bill was absolutely necessary (AV:18 Mar. 1920, 6).
 - Delavale and Stagpoole join the Walter George Revue Company... [They] should be a decided acquisition inasmuch as both are exceptionally versatile, and not afraid of hard work. Although only formed some months ago, the act of Delavale and Stagpoole has played most successful seasons in Perth and on the Clay circuit, so their [current] engagement should be marked with still further triumph (E: 11 May 1921, 16)
 - Charlie (Ike) Delavale is a very big favourite over the Clay circuit where, for nearly eight months he has been localising verses of the well-known song "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More." As an eccentric dancer, this young Australian is particularly agile (TT: Mar. 1925, n. pag.).
 - A hit all over the Clay circuit is Ike Delavale with his smart revue entertainers. He lately staged Lovey Dovey at the Gaiety in Oxford Street, and this piece, generally regarded in many quarters as the best in his repertoire, went as well as ever. The clever jokes and, above all, the delightful dancing of the Gaiety Girls all contributed to the general success of this well-built piece, a sample of revue that compares more than favourably with the imported article (TT: May 1926, 41).
 - Sherry and Bitters is the title of the revue this week at the Gaiety Theatre, Oxford Street. The principals are headed by the talented Ike Delavale, who is a show in himself. Mabelle Morgan, one of the best principal boys ever seen on our stage, is another important factor in these Delavale revues (JI: 9 Sept. 1926, 29).

¹ In "What Oh Tonight" (2005 Ph D thesis) I argue that Fred Parson's biography is highly suspect in relation to any of Roy Rene's career prior to his radio career. Parson's did not meet Rene until 1936 and numerous errors have been identified in Mo's Memoirs for the period leading up to that time – including his Stiffy and Mo years. Even this anecdote will require further research in order to verify its veracity.

- [Charles] Delavale instills individuality into his work, and has a trump card in the line of stepping that makes 'em laugh, laud and applaud. Thinking back this means something, as most comedy merchants playing this theatre of late have fed the customers well and consistently on choice tit-bits in the novelty dance line (E: 17 Oct. 1928, n. pag.).

MAUD FANNING

Coon impersonator/comic/contralto. Born in 1874 at Newcastle to Edward Charles and Catherine A. Fanning, she was the younger sister of Charles Fanning,² one of Australia's greatest ever minstrel comics and jubilee singers. Maud herself became a hugely popular minstrel performer right across the country. Her professional career began at the age of five and by the late 1880s was working with other members of her family, including a partnership with older sister Rosie as the Fanning Sisters. She later worked for all the major vaudeville organisations during her career, including Harry Rickards, the Fullers, and Harry Clay, in addition to engagements with Walter Bell, J.C. Williamson's, John F. Sheridan, William Cosgrove, and Holloway and Anderson, to name just a few. The Theatre said of her in 1913, while she was on the Tivoli circuit, that "there is not a vaudeville patron in Australia who has not seen her in one or other of Australia's vaudeville houses" (Aug. 1913, 33). Married to another well-known vaudevillian, Arthur Elliott (aka Arthur Hargrave), Fanning had several children all of whom worked with either her or their father. She is known to have continued performing in popular theatre until around the early 1920s.

Maud Fanning's career in minstrelsy and vaudeville was extraordinarily long and successful, beginning in the late 1870s and stretching on until the 1920s. She was to become arguably the most popular and influential Australian coon singer of her time, and in association with her husband Arthur Elliot, daughters, Violet, Lulla, Huia, and son Arthur, made an extensive contribution to variety theatre in this country. In his autobiography Roy Rene wrote of Fanning: "She was a very good coon singer, and the house used to rock when she came on. She would bring on her kids, she had a team of them and they used to pull the place down. She was the best coon singer of her day and very hardworking" (79).

Born in Newcastle NSW in 1874, Maud Fanning's association with the stage was very much a family affair from the start. Her father Edward Charles Fanning had a successful band in Newcastle for many years, while two sisters, Bertha and Florence were also involved in the industry. Bertha (who later became Mrs McKnight) was a popular contralto who made many concert appearances, including some with Phillip Newbury at the Sydney Town Hall. She later became a teacher of music in Mosman (Sydney). Florence R. (also known as Rosie) worked for some time with both John F. Sheridan and John Anderson (as did Maud), while it is known that another brother, Edward (who died ca.1908) was with George Rignold for several years as his dresser, and in addition played light character parts on the stage. It was older brother Charles, however, who matched career success with Maud over many years, he being one of the leading comics and singers to emerge from Australia, and who was associated on several occasions with Harry Clay during the 1880s and 1890s. Indeed, Fanning's reputation saw him perform in troupes with almost all the recognised minstrels to have toured or worked the country. He eventually moved to South Africa where he continued to perform, before dying of consumption in 1915.

Although Maud Fanning has claimed that she initially began performing at age five, the first record of her appearing on stage found during the course of this thesis was in 1890 at the Bondi Aquarium, where Charles Fanning's Popular Concert Company was advertised to appear. The company included, along with Charles and Maud, sister Bertha, J. Whitworth and Lorrie St. George among others. By 1894 both Maud and Rosie were appearing regularly at the Alhambra Music Hall, a venue that Maud continued to perform at for a number of years (although under different managements). In 1898 a reference to her appearing in Fun on the Bristol, with Henry's Dramatic Company has been found, as are further appearances at the Alhambra (under Percy St. John and W.J. Wilson). In 1900 she found engagements with John Sheridan's company, and later in the year appeared on the later leg of Walter Bell's Waxworks tour of Queensland, with the troupe including Harry Clay.

Fanning continued to perform around Australia and through New Zealand over the next decade, at some stage marrying Arthur Hargrave (aka Arthur Elliott), and over the course of the years giving birth to at least three girls and one boy. In a 1913 Theatre interview Fanning records that she had been for some time one of J.C. Williamson's ballet-girls and that she played Bella in Fun on the Bristol for William Cosgrove years before John Sheridan was seen in the same piece. She later joined the Anderson/Holloway theatrical company, and it was here, Fanning said, that she first did her coon act, which was in fact a pedestal dance and a song called "The Alabama Coon." Fanning also notes that while in New Zealand for the Fullers she was signed up by Harry Rickards who spotted her at a performance. She reportedly worked his circuit for some eight years (TT: Aug 1913, 33).

By 1910 both Maud and the rest of her family were enjoying much acclaim. As the Theatre notes in relation to an engagement at the National Amphitheatre, "What a delightful act is that put on by the Three Elliotts! These dainty and clever children are Maud Fanning's, who has surely coached them with gentleness and love.... The trio are recalled again and again" (TT: Mar. 1910, 18). Around this time, too, the family is known to have been working the Clay circuit in Sydney.

² There remains some confusion as to whether Fanning or Fanning is the correct spelling. Each is used as often as the other throughout the careers of both Charles and Maud, as well as Maud's daughter, Lulla/Lalla (?). This thesis and "What Oh Tonight" (2005 Ph D thesis) have adopted the 'nn' spelling.

In 1912 Fanning, her husband and four children toured Queensland for Harry Clay, being with little doubt one of the company's leading attractions. By 1914, and with a new born infant added to the family's (on-stage) troupe the Fanning/Elliott family had indeed become an Australian institution. They continued to find engagements throughout the country and New Zealand, and are known to have worked for Clay's at least in 1915 and 1919. Lulla, Violet and Huia have also been recorded as working on the Clay circuit on occasions throughout the 1920s.

It is not been established when Fanning retired from the stage, with the last mention of her found to date being her appearance at the final programme at the Sydney Tivoli Theatre in October 1929, (believed to have been as an audience member only). Roy Rene has mentioned that Lulla Fanning and Violet Elliott had become successful in radio and in London pantomime respectively in late years. Maud Fanning died sometime in the early 1940s.

-
- It was in New Zealand that I first came under the notice of Mr Rickards. I was appearing there with the Fullers. I was singing a song that belonged to one of Mr Rickards imported comedians. I think Mr Rickards and the comedian were at the show together. At any rate, Mr Rickards came round to my dressing room and asked me to let him know when I would be finished with the Fullers... Later... I was told to open [for the Tivoli circuit] in West Australia. I remained for eight years with Mr Rickards... From time to time [he] got special scenes for me. I very much admired Mr Rickards. He was goodness itself to me. He was so genuine (TT: Aug. 1913, 33).
 - Maud Fanning - well, if anybody ever earns a salary its Maud. I have never seen a harder trier in the business. She was a riot, and her three cleanest girls in vaudeville cleaned up with their raggy singing. Daddy Arthur Elliott has some punch in his comicalities, and it's a sure four he has to do before he can retire (TT: 24 Feb. 1915, 13).
 - The volcanic Maud Fanning... got a rousing reception [at the National]. The point about this is that Miss Fanning is now being seen in Sydney for about the thousandth time. Has there ever been - or will there be - seen any other artist who could in such circumstances move an audience to the enthusiasm displayed in the case of Miss Fanning? Her record in this respect stands second to none (TT: May 1915, 41).
 - Maud Fanning and her children are again proving a phenomenal draw with the Fullers in New Zealand. Of the many hundred acts on the circuit it is doubtful if any artists has so consistently retained her popularity as has Miss Fanning. One recalls the early days of the Fullers, when the late P.R. Dix was importing stars. During that period Miss Fanning played a record season of over seven months at the old Choral Hall, Wellington. Irene Franklin was on of the Dix stars. The dusky Maud, singing the same songs was easily the bigger favourite in the windy city (TT: May 1917, 41).

NELLE KOLLE

English descriptive vocalist/pianist/male impersonator. Born around 1892, Nellie Kolle first toured Australia in 1912 for the Fullers, returning on several occasions after that before eventually settling in the country on a more permanent basis. During her early days in the Australasian regions she was also associated with a number of other managements, including Dix-Baker, and Graham and Howard. By 1916 she was working almost exclusively on the Fuller circuit in both Australia and New Zealand, and was receiving much critical acclaim and popularity throughout both countries. Around this time, too, she became an established pantomime star, further cementing her position in Australia as one of the best-known performers on the variety stage. Kolle continued to tour throughout Australia and New Zealand up into the 1920s, and by 1922 was known to have secured regular engagements on Harry Clay's circuit. During the early to mid 1920s she was touring her own vaudeville show around Australia, playing many country towns including those of Western Australia. In 1927 she toured Queensland for Clay's as headline act, as is known to have remained on the Clay circuit over the next year or so. Kolle continued to perform into the 1930s, having been recorded as performing in pantomimes over this period, including a 1928-29 engagement with O'Donnell and Ray throughout Australia.

Born Nellie Frances Kolle in England ca.1892, she received a diploma from the London College of Music at age ten, with one report noting that she had been "endowed with a voice of wonderful tone and power [and] was gifted with a natural stage equipment" (AV: 2 Feb. 1916, n. pag.). After winning first prize in a competition for juveniles, the prize being a week's engagement at a suburban hall with a salary of £3, she became well known around the English provinces as the leader of the famous Dixie Dolls. Kolle was booked by Ben Fuller in London for a sixteen week engagement in 1912 - her first tour to the Antipodes. However, it was in the end to last some six years or more. In October of that year, too, she married Graham Herbert Penrose Hopkins in Wellington, New Zealand. Hopkins, a theatrical manager of Phair's Buildings in Melbourne, apparently sold his business and accompanied his new wife on her tour, having been promised that she would retire from the stage upon the conclusion of her contract six months later. With the success that she was achieving on the tour to that date Kolle, not surprisingly, changed her mind and accepted another contract.

By 1914 she had found other engagements (in addition to her regular appearances with the Fullers), with some of the companies including the Dix-Baker organisation based in Newcastle, and Frank Graham and Bert Howard's Sydney suburban circuit. Australian Variety records, however, that during these early years in vaudeville some of her efforts on the stage were rather

amateurish. The improvement in Kolle's act was seemingly quick, though, as reviews indicate that her appeal had begun to find greater critical support, to supplement her popularity with audiences, by 1915. Indeed, the reviews by then were constantly indicating the popularity she was being accorded by the public. Writing from Auckland to the Green Room in 1915, one bedazzled Fullers patron said of her: "No individual singer has left so deep a remembrance as Miss Kollie. Turns have come and gone - good turns; but a return visit by Miss Kolle would be more welcome in Auckland than any other artist we have seen here before" (1 Dec. 1918, n. pag.).

By all reports it would appear that by the end of 1915 Kolle had established herself as one of the leading principle boys and variety artists working in Australia. She starred in the Fullers' 1916 production of The Bunyip pantomime at the Grand Opera House, and followed this with a highly successful season for the company in Melbourne as a member of Nat Phillips' Revue Company. Reviews and critical comments published during the latter part of 1915 clearly indicate that she had by then become a major attraction on the Fullers circuit:

The applause hit of the bill at the National is, beyond doubt, Nellie Kolle, the clever young English male impersonator. Possessing an exceptionally powerful voice, with fine tone and quality, and rendering her songs with perfect enunciation, she was recalled a half dozen times at her opening on Saturday (AV: 26 Jan. 1916, n. pag.).

The Theatre noted, too, that she had "lost the rawness and raucousness" of her previous singing. The magazine's reviewer went on to say that "there is no art in Miss Kolle's work. But she has had experience.... [and she] lives every line she sings." He went on to say further: "It would make the average chorus-comedian die with envy to see what Miss Kolle so effortlessly accomplishes. Had it only been this gifted girl's luck to come under the right direction she might long ago have been one of the world's vaudeville stars" (Mar. 1916, 47).

Over the next few years Kolle continued to draw both high praise from the critics and huge audiences. During the holiday period of 1917/18 she was again the principle boy in their pantomime, this being Robinson Crusoe. Australian Variety records in November of 1917 that her drawing potential was such that she had only been able to play three cities in an 18 month period, (the third city being Adelaide) "a record any artists would feel proud to claim in any part of the world" (23 Nov. 1917, n. pag.).

The following year Kolle was sued for divorce by her husband on the grounds of desertion. Hopkins claimed that Kolle had continually promised to give up the stage, but each time a contract finished she took up another one. The court was told that there were two children from the union but that "she would not give up the stage to live a domestic life, and would not live with him any longer." Kolle was further recorded as saying she would go to Perth for her next engagement despite her husband not giving her his consent, and that she "was sick and tired of living with him." Hopkins was awarded a decree nisi by the judge (GR: 1 Dec. 1918, n. pag.).

Kolle's star continued to climb during the early 1920s, having continued on the Fullers' circuit throughout Australia and New Zealand. In 1922 she took on what is believed to have been her first engagement with Harry Clay, an association which saw her generally perform as the headline act over his circuit. During the next few years she apparently formed her own company, touring throughout Australia, including many country areas. A 1925 par in the Theatre's, April issue for instance, indicates that she was "again" touring the towns of West Australia. The following month Kolle herself wrote to the magazine, informing them that:

I am touring the West with my own vaudeville show, using my own motor car. The combination has a fine reputation around the country towns visited. ... It is my intention to leave for the East next month, and will make the trip by car (May 1925, n. pag.).

In 1926 Kolle is again known to have been working the Clay circuit, an association which lasted through to the next year. During this period she continued to performing in pantomimes, with her appearance in Bert "Mugsy" Desmond's production of Puss in Boots being a feature attraction. Sometime during the early part of the year she came fifth in a song contest held by the Sydney Sun with her own composition, and later headlined Clay's return tour of Queensland under Wally Edwards' stewardship. Press reports indicate that as usual Kolle's appearance on stage brought forth thunderous applause, and that she could rarely escape without multiple recalls.

Kolle's movements after ending her contract with Clay's have become a little less clear - due mostly to the increasing lack of interest in vaudeville by the industry magazines. It is known, however, that she established an association of several years with the O'Donnell and Ray Company, who were noted for their pantomimes on the Fuller circuit around this time. Everyone's said of her engagement in 1928: "She is one of the reasons why the company is playing to phenomenal business throughout Australia." In a review of her role as Prince Rupert of Kingswood in Beauty and the Beast at the Melbourne Palace in January 1929 the same magazine issue records: "Nellie Kolle as principal boy proves that she can hold her own with the best of them. The manner in which she works the audience up to join her in the singing of choruses is a tribute to personality" (16 Jan. 1929, 40).

- During her several tours of Australasia, this young singer has earned unstinted praise and unlimited appreciation from Fullers audiences. In this latter connection, Miss Kolle has found it rather awkward to, at times, keep the stage waiting whilst she responded to the insistent demands for encores (AV: 2 Feb. 1916, n. pag.).

- Nellie Kolle is as popular in pantomime as she is in vaudeville. Her numerous admirers in the latter sphere will know what that means. Such is Miss Kolle's magnetic force, to say nothing of her personal, individual charm, that she has at the close of her songs to tear herself away from the demonstratively-applauding spectators (TT: Jan. 1917, 22).
- Nellie Kolle is one of the shining lights at the Gaiety Theatre, Oxford Street, this week, and the audiences never seem to grow tired of her varied repertory of songs, in the choruses of which many of the audience join. The Australian favourite is well to the fore in up-to-date ditties (JI: 23 Sept. 1926, 29).
- [Nellie Kolle's] mastery of the piano is perhaps her greatest talent. Her touch is sure and firm and the result of this all too rare gift is a clarity in the music which makes it a treat to listen to. She gave a very fine rendering of an impression of the intermezzo, *Cavaleria Rusticana*. Afterwards she played syncopated jazz, and accompaniments for her own monologues, and also gave a song "Sydney" written and composed by herself (TC: 19 Mar. 1927, 5).

BERT LE BLANC

Hebrew comic / musical comedy actor / singer / revue producer. Born Bert Cohen in Downeyville, California (USA) in 1889, he spent most of his life in showbiz. Le Blanc³ is first believed to have toured Australia in 1913 as a member of the American Musical Burlesque Company. He ended up staying in the country for the rest of his life. In 1914 he joined the Fuller organisation and by the following year was touring his own company around the circuit with box office-breaking success. He married fellow vaudevillian Winifred Knight on the 27th May 1916 and soon after toured New Zealand. In 1917 Le Blanc opened the Majestic Theatre at Newtown for the Fullers, and continued to work the Australasian regions for them up until around 1921. Sometime during the year he began appearing on Harry Clay's circuit, and the following year disbanded his revue company after a New Zealand tour, taking on an engagement with Jake Mack over Birch and Carroll's Queensland circuit. In 1922 Le Blanc is known to have again been working for Harry Clay in Sydney, an association which is believed to have lasted until around the end of the year. By 1925 he was once again on the Fuller circuit, playing pantomimes and musical tabloids (in partnership with George "Hermie" Ward).

Bert Le Blanc began to establish a considerable reputation in Australia right from the beginning of his first tour. Under the direction of William Anderson he came to this country as part of the American Burlesque Company which was presenting The Grafters and several other musical comedy burlesques. The tour, which had previously played the Pacific circuit (including China, Japan and the Philippines) also starred Paul Stanhope and Eugenie Le Blanc (no relation). The company's Australian leg opened in Melbourne on March 15th, and in Sydney on June 14th, later including the other capital cities in Australia and a hurried New Zealand tour. Le Blanc, one of the lead actors, had previously begun to carve out a name for himself in the USA playing musical comedies and performing as a Hebrew character actor. At one stage he reportedly worked with Al Jolson when the pair played a US minstrel circuit. In its 24 December issue of 1913 Australian Variety noted:

There is no Mistaking the Fact that Bert Le Blanc is an exceptionally fine Hebrew comedian. His work in the present production of A Day at the Races is particularly funny, thanks to the doleful yet expressive manner in which he utilises his face. For all-round success, Le Blanc has put up the best performance of any Jewish comedian we have yet seen (1).

Following the disbanding of the American Burlesquer Company sometime around September 1914, Le Blanc began an engagement on the Fuller circuit, an association which included vaudeville, pantomime and revue. It was suggested in some quarters, however, that his projection needed some work and that he "would score better in vaudeville if he had a feeder, but even alone he is an amusing comedian" (AV: 18 Nov. 1914, 3). By 1915 he was running his own company (The Musical Travesty Company) under the Fuller banner and began breaking box office records for the organisation in every city they played. During this period, too, he joined forces with another Hebrew comedian Jake Mack, creating a partnership which was to last for some time, and which became one of the more successful duos in Australian vaudeville. His commitments to the Fullers saw him tour right throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Le Blanc's popularity is borne out by the fact that on no less than four occasions during the two year period 1916-17, he appeared on the front cover of Australian Variety, in addition to a considerable coverage of his career and activities. The Fullers thought so highly of him that they signed his company to open their newly built Majestic Theatre at Newtown on June 2nd 1917, an engagement which according to the Theatre in August had "registered a run there of eight weeks, with a change of programme at every Saturday-afternoon matinee" (Aug. 1917, n. pag.). Even his wedding to Winnie Knight received a comparatively large coverage in the trade journals at the time. With regard to the Le Blanc and Mack partnership, the Theatre noted in June 1916, for instance:

Mr Le Blanc and Mr Mack are, in short, an ideal pair. As Hebrews they are entirely different. Mr Le Blanc is stiff and stolid - or rather those are the qualities he seeks to get out of his characterisation. On the other hand Mr Mack is as lissome as an eel, and as light-headed as a rabbit. Mr Le Blanc more or less acts the part of Mr

³ Cohen's stage name is variously spelled Le Blanc and La Blanc throughout much of his career. For the sake of consistency this thesis and the "What Oh Tonight" (2005 Ph D thesis) have adopted the Le Blanc spelling, which appears to be the more common usage.

Mack's feeder. Thus it is a generous arrangement from Mr Le Blanc's point of view, for Mr Mack is given every opportunity of scoring with the audience, even at the expense of Mr La Blanc. Evidently Mr Le Blanc is more concerned in the success of the show as a whole than in any individual personal triumph (40).

Le Blanc's Revue Company continued to find much critical and public support on the Fullers circuit over the next few years, and indeed up until the early 1920s. In 1917, the company contained a number of well-known artists including Carlton Chase, Essie Jennings (wife of Jim Gerald, who was away on war duties), and of course Mack. The following year Le Blanc and Co, which for some period also included Queenie Paul, toured throughout the Australian regional centres for the Fullers, covering areas such as Queensland, Northern NSW (including Broken Hill), Kalgoorlie, Perth (under the management of Harry Sadler), South Australia, Victoria and Southern NSW.

In early 1921 Le Blanc began appearing on Harry Clay's circuit in revues and as part of the vaudeville section, teaming up with Ted Stanley on a regular basis during the year. In early 1922, however, he and Jake Mack again toured New Zealand with the Travesty Company, but disbanded the troupe following their final season. Upon their return to Australia the duo toured Queensland for Birch and Carroll (ca. May/June). By August Le Blanc was again on the Clay circuit, where it is believed he continued to perform throughout the remainder of the year. By 1925 Le Blanc was back on Fuller time, appearing in revues and pantomimes. Everyone's notes in January of that year that he would shortly "go back on the vaudeville circuit, playing opposite George "Hermie" Ward in musical tabloids" (14 Jan. 1925, 36).

Research for this thesis has not uncovered much regarding Le Blanc's career after 1926, although according to several reports he continued on in the theatre in some manner after this for quite a few years. It is likely that the demise of vaudeville's popularity, and the increased interest in film kept him from continuing with the success that was metered out to him during the period 1913 to 1925. John West notes that when he was old enough to qualify for a pension Le Blanc "got himself naturalized [sic] and voted in his first election in his late sixties - a fact of which he was quietly proud" (121).

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- Mr Le Blanc holds that there is nothing wrong in presenting a member of his race from the stage in a light humorous manner. "The trouble is," he declares, "that some so burlesque the character as to make it offensive to members of the Jewish race. I avoid doing that..." His stage humour is of the dry kind. "My idea," he says, "is that a laugh got by something told in an easy, quiet, dry manner is worth three laughs secured by a performer as a result of his having to make a hard strained, noisy appeal to them" (TT: July 1913, 20).
 - (Bijou Theatre) Central 3251 was the new revue of Bert Le Blanc's Company, and it scored immense (sic) throughout with the customers. A bright, breezy combination of singing, dancing and gagging, it put the punch into the bill solid. Bert Le Blanc and Jake Mack have still a long vein of genuine humour, and they had the house any how with real laughs right through (AV: 28 July 1915, 13).
 - After the closing season [of the American Burlesque Co] I immediately went under the management of Ben J. Fuller, who put me in vaudeville, and later in [the] Babes in the Woods pantomime where I must candidly say I had the worst part I have ever had handed me in my theatrical career. At the close of the panto I was placed to produce the show now bearing my name, and which has been a record breaker everywhere. Within the past six months I have produced five shows and have thirty more on my list to turn out (AV: 5 Jan. 1916, n. pag).
 - Bert Le Blanc, even if as loud-voiced as ever, is a man whom the gods love (TT: June 1921, 17).
 - (Gaiety Theatre): - A rather clever travesty dealing with the mishaps of two woebegone sailors occupies the first half of the bill, the funmakers being Bert Le Blanc (sic) and Ted Stanley (E: 10 Aug. 1921, 15).
 - (Gaiety Theatre): - The tabloid offerings of Ted Stanley and Bert Le Blanc (sic) are greatly relished at this popular Oxford Street house (E: 7 Sept. 1921, 15)

ARTHUR MORLEY

Basso vocalist/comic/song writer/revue writer and producer/company manager/poet. Born Arthur M. Welch, and known to have spent much of his early life in Rockhampton. Morley began his career in the Queensland regional areas during the late 1800s/early 1900s. He worked as stage manager in Newcastle with the Dix-Baker firm for a period, and later partnered his wife Elsie Bates in an act known as Morley and Bates, before joining Harry Clay's company around 1915. His employment was initially as a performer, but soon afterwards he took on the additional roles of revue writer and producer. In mid 1917 Morley left Clay's and a few months later joined Harry Sadler's operations at the Princess Theatre, continuing on in the same roles. He rejoined Clay's the following year, staying with the company until 1919. Morley is known to have continued writing and performing up until at least 1928, at which time he was associated with Bert Howard's pantomime company.

The earliest recorded performance by Arthur Morley found to date was in 1911, when he presented a one-night season (by special request) in Rockhampton, along with his wife Elsie Bates. The Morning Bulletin noted that this concert was the first production in many years by Morley, and that he had grown up in the area. The pair was advertised on Harry Clay's return visit programme that year, too, but for some reason were unable to appear, forcing Clay to apologise to the audience (MB: 11 July 1911). In 1913, and described as "one of the old school" Morley began a six month engagement as stage manager for the Dix-Baker organisation (Newcastle). He is known to have been engaged two years later (1915) by Clay's, appearing with the Royal Musical Comedy Co, which he managed, along with his wife. Australian Variety wrote of one of his earliest productions:

The Royal Musical Comedy Co. opened and were responsible for the "House Full" signs being out long before the curtain was raised. The company was brilliant, and surpassed all previous expectations. The whole show was bright and catchy, and did not leave one dull moment. Each item was cleverly and effectively given with excellent business and comedy touches, and the strong talent was particularly good. The musical items are fresh and attractive, and has none of the hackneyed quality of many of the recent revues seen at other theatres lately. This revue was received with most marked manifestations of approval. As for the producing and the staging, it was excellent with original and artistic touches, and too much praise and credit cannot be given to Mr Arthur Morley, as he no doubt must have worked very hard to bring off such success. Arthur in his character, displayed ability and talent that has only been received from such experience that he has had (27 Oct. 1915, n. pag.).

During 1915, too, he presented one of the first known revues on the vaudeville stage, this being On the Sands at the NBT with Elsie Bates (in the principal lead female role), Amy Rochelle, Doris Baker and Ted Tutty. The show included a number of the women in "pretty bathing costumes and beach promenade dresses" (AV: 10 Nov. 1915, 13). Later in the year he also contributed an article to Australian Variety's Christmas issue.

In 1916 Morley established himself as Harry Clay's leading revue producer, with his productions during the year including: A Kiss in the Dark, Who's the Liar, On the Sands, On Deck, Not a Word to the Wife, In Old Kentucky, and Saints and Sinner. The popularity of his works was such that Morley was forced to warn "pirates," through the trade journals that those revues and burlesques were his sole property and were fully copyrighted. Morley's revues produced during 1917 also included: Who's the Boss, Run for the Doctor, Not a Word to the Wife, Six O'clock Closing, and Everybody's Doing It. During the year, too, Morley was reportedly "in the course of preparation for a moving picture which will run into five reels," entitled The Power of Man. "Elsie Bates [would] play an important part in the production" noted Australian Variety (2 May 1917, 8). Morley continued to work for Clay's, his role being widely regarded during these years as one of great pressure, he being required to maintain a steady stream of revues along with the many other managerial duties required of him.

By August 1917 Morley had ended his association with Clay's, although he was reportedly engaged by Harry Clay to purchase some revues from America around that time. On his return to Australia Morley took up a role as producer/writer for Harry Sadler at the Princess Theatre (Syd). He and Bates then accepted an engagement with Sadler in Western Australia during the year, opening at the Shaftesbury Theatre, Perth, in what was a particularly successful season. It was, however, one which eventually became national news due to an off-stage situation involving himself, Harry Sadler and Phyllis Faye (the company's lead soubrette). In response to some libelous accusations levelled at Morley and Faye by Sadler, a bitter split in the troupe's loyalties saw the pair, and Bates, leave Sadler's company to join up with rival Perth entrepreneur and bookmaker Percy Dennis. The blow-up led eventually to Morley becoming embroiled in one of the most infamous court cases involving the vaudeville industry, when Harry Sadler was sued for libel by Phyllis Faye. The case, which was heard in 1918, revolved around Sadler's accusation that Morley was having an affair with Faye, having been apparently seen both coming of her room and in her bed, despite the fact that Elsie Bates was with him in Perth at the time of the apparent affair, (Faye's husband, Bruce Drysdale was away at the war). After a great deal of controversial evidence, much of it surrounding Sadler's past attempts to seduce Miss Faye, the court found in favour of the plaintiff and she was awarded both damages (£25) and costs (said to have been very high).

Following his Western Australian commitments Morley returned to Sydney, taking another engagement with Clay's, where he remained until sometime in 1919. One of his biggest successes during the period was Dockum Street, Woolloomooloo, (which was toured through Queensland). In 1920 he retired from the entertainment industry, returning to Rockhampton with his wife, who is believed to have had a milliner's establishment there.

By 1922, however, he had made a re-appearance on the stage, having been engaged by Reg Wykeham at the Hippodrome, Sydney. He was again utilised to produce, write and act in revues, one particularly successful production being Ship Ahoy, with Sadie Gale, George Whitehead, Bert Desmond and Will and Dora Gilbert. In 1928 Morley is known to have been touring for Bert Howard playing pantomimes (including Beauty and the Beast) in a troupe that also included Wal Rockley and Dan Thomas. Little else has been found concerning his or Elsie Bates' careers after this, however. Morley's writing career also includes the publication of several poems, a number of them in Australian Variety.

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- (Clay's Touring Company): - presenting On the Sands, reports good business despite adverse weather. A wire received from Arthur Morley last Saturday read: - "Three records - rain, enjoyment and record business. Stopped sale of tickets at 7.30. [Will] Rollow behaving himself; everybody happy" (AV: 4 Oct. 1916, n. pag.).

- (Bridge Theatre, Newtown): - Picking 'em Out was presented, and suffice to say that it was from the pen of Arthur Morley, and an undoubted success, with its good comedy, bright numbers, and novel ideas. [he] was [also] well to the front with a grand old war story, which brought down the house (AV: 13 Dec. 1916, n. pag.).
- For his sentimental and patriotic airs Arthur Morley is always enthusiastically recalled... [his and Will Rollow's] up-to-the-minute political puffs and topicalities given under the title of "I'll Do It" are original and entertaining, and constitute the brightest item in the musical comedy, A Kiss in the Dark (TT: Jan. 1917, 52).
- A word must not be forgotten for Arthur Morley (the writer of the revues, who also has been producer for the last three years), who during this time, has put on a new production each week, which in itself is a big record (AV: 23 May 1917).
- One evening last week Mr Arthur Morley (Harry Clay's producer) overheard a discussion outside the Bridge Theatre, Newtown, where it was stated that he (Arthur) had very little to attend to. "Oh yes," said deep-voiced Arthur, "very little to do, have I? Only to keep Mr Clay's companies supplied with a new musical production every week, very often play a part in the said production, work in a trio, play in a farce, do a single, make out a mile or so of publicity matter, and conduct rehearsals!" We wonder what Arthur does in his spare time? (AV: 18 July 1917, n. pag.).
- Arthur [Morley] deserves the encouragement handed out to him. He is a real hard worker, and it is no easy matter putting on a new revue each week at the Princess Theatre. At the rate he is going the management will have to fix Arthur up with a bed as he will not have time to leave the theatre (AV: 22 Feb. 1918, n. pag.).

PHILLIPS SISTERS

Duetists/dancers/impersonations. Eileen and Bessie Phillips, daughters of Mrs Norah Phillips of Brisbane, were raised in Kelvin Grove, Brisbane. They began performing around southwest Queensland ca.1911, and are believed to have toured New Zealand in late 1913, early 1914. Following this they began their association with Harry Clay, touring Queensland in 1914, (as well as in 1916 and 1917), eventually spending some seven years with his company. They would, however, find regular outside engagements, including the Fullers, Dix-Baker (Newcastle), the Tivoli organisation, and Weston and Hill among others. The duo briefly terminated their association with Clay in 1921, to take on an engagement in Perth with James Caldwell, Bessie's husband. The West Australian engagement lasted into 1922, and was followed by work with various other companies, including the Fullers. By 1924, the sisters were again on Clay time with engagements continuing up until at least 1927.

Not to be confused with Gertie and Hilda Phillips (who were also known as the Phillips Sisters, and who are believed to have been the Phillips Sisters who toured with Harry Clay in 1904), Eileen and Bessie Phillips were born and raised in Kelvin Grove (Brisbane). Their partnership act is thought to have lasted over twenty years, with their professional careers starting around 1911. It is known, for example, that they appeared on a bill with Julian Rose (the internationally known Hebrew comic) at Martoo's Olympia Theatre, Ipswich in March that year, billed as "Eileen Phillips and her Charming Little Sister" (QT: 16 Mar. 1911, 1). Sometime around the end of 1913, early 1914, they toured New Zealand with a company, and upon their return accepted an engagement with Harry Clay to tour Queensland. Returning to Sydney, Eileen and Bessie continued to find regular work with Clay at the Bridge Theatre, and established themselves as big favourites with the Newtown audiences over the next seven years. During that time they toured QLD twice (in 1916 and 1917) in addition to occasional engagements with a variety of leading managements, including the Fullers.

In 1917 Australian Variety said of the pair, they are "one of Australia's most versatile double acts. Their repertoire is an extensive one, and their work of a very high calibre. During the past two years they have been prominent on Harry Clay's circuit - a fact which speaks volumes for their ability" (17 Jan. 1917, n. pag.). Eileen often play the "boy" in their turns, and was said to have a voice remindful of Nellie Koller in the volume of her delivery, and in appearance and manner of Effie Fellows (TT: May 1916, 51). She was also acknowledged for her "easy confident manner, and the way she captivates the audience" (TT: Jan. 1918, 37). In many respects Eileen was the one who received the most critical acclaim throughout their career. Despite the somewhat uneven nature of their reported talents, the two were undeniably popular with audiences around the country.

In 1921 the Phillips temporarily ended their seven year association with Harry Clay to take up an extended season at the Shaftesbury Theatre in Perth, leaving with James Caldwell (who had been married to Bessie since September 1919) along with Ivy Davis and Courtney Ford and the Paulastros. By 1924, however, the pair were back on Clay time, continuing regular engagements up until at least 1927.

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- The Phillips Sisters, with attractive costumes, again performed exceedingly well together, and went very big; these two girls should make a hit on any bill, as their turn is well put over (AV: 13 Oct. 1915, 12).
 - The Phillips Sisters are great favourites with the Harry Clay-ites at the Newtown Bridge Theatre. What a captivating manner has the darker one of the two (TT: Feb. 1917, 32).

- The Philips Sisters are still very popular. Eileen's smile and Bessie's pose will never fail. Always something new to offer, with artistic dressings, these two clever girls never fail to score (AV: 1 Mar. 1918).
- The Phillips sister who plays the girl could be much more expressive in face and gesture. Largely because of what she lacks in this direction may the success of the turn be said to rest wholly with the boy-attired sister. They had to give three numbers nightly at the Princess (Syd) during [last month]. Even then the audience would have had more of them if it could have got it (TT: Nov. 1918, 24).
- The Philips Sisters must be about the most popular pair of girls in Australian vaudeville.... the audience are aglow with appreciation all the time the duo are on the stage (TT: Oct. 1919 28).
- Bessie and Eileen Phillips had to respond to no less than three encores last Monday evening; they dress luxuriously in their quaint, old-fashioned minuets (E: 13 Apr. 1921, 15)

ROY RENE

Comic/revue and pantomime actor/singer/film and radio actor. Born Harry Van der Sluice (according to Rene) in Adelaide on the 15th February 1892, to Hyam (or Henry) a cigar manufacturer and Amelia (nee Barnett). Rene first appeared on the professional stage in a pantomime at age 13 and a few years later worked a solo acts as "Boy Roy the singing soprano." In 1912 he moved to Sydney and eventually secured an engagement with Harry Clay (including a Queensland tour) and with J. C. Bain. After being spotted by the Fullers he was signed to tour New Zealand. After returning to Australia he began his partnership with Nat Phillips as Stiffy and Mo. In 1917 Rene married actress Dorothy Claire Davis (they divorced in 1929). Meanwhile the Stiffy and Mo pairing was well on its way to becoming one of Australia's legendary comic teams, one which continued to enormous success until 1925, at which point it was said neither performer could continue working with the other. The following year Rene partnered Fred Bluett on the Tivoli circuit, but within twelve months had been persuaded to rejoin Phillips as Stiffy and Mo. It lasted only until 1928, however, with the pair breaking up while on tour in New Zealand. Rene returned to the Clay circuit in 1929. He and his new wife, Sadie Gale, toured northern Queensland only days after their wedding that year - and the tour is believed to have been under the management of Clay's. In early 1930 he almost died from peritonitis, but was able to return to the stage later that year. In 1931 he joined Connors and Paul, appearing regularly with one of his arch rivals for "the mob," Jim Gerald, and two years later made his only film Strike Me Lucky - a somewhat disappointing venture for him, as it failed to compare favourably with the efforts of another rival, George Wallace. Rene continued to perform on stage past the Second World War, and in 1946 signed a contract to appear on radio - where he presented his much acclaimed McCackie Mansion series. By 1950, he was being plagued by ill health, and died on the 22nd of November 1954.

The degree to which Roy Rene's career in particular, and the vaudeville era in general, has been under-examined is indicated both by the large biographical gaps and the significant inaccuracies accorded this most acclaimed Australian entertainer. For example, in all the references to Roy Rene's early career located as part of the research for this thesis, particularly with regard to his time in Sydney, none have mentioned his engagement with Harry Clay over the years 1913 and 1914. This despite Rene's own recall of the events which led to his employment on the circuit, and published in his autobiography Mo's Memoirs. [see Chapter 3 of this thesis for further details] Further to this it has been claimed in one account that it wasn't until the time of his first New Zealand tour with the Fullers around 1915 that he began using the name Roy Rene (Parsons and Chance, 485). Advertising and reviews which refer to him by that name during his appearances on the Clay circuit and throughout the section of the Queensland tour he appeared on in 1913 show this to be incorrect, however. While details of Rene's early career are not surprisingly sketchy, due to the fact that he was at this stage a relative newcomer to Sydney and Australian vaudeville, it has been possible to put together a brief account of his time with Harry Clay's company.

Roy Rene's first showbusiness success appears to have occurred at age ten when he won a singing competition in his home town of Adelaide. Three years later, and shortly before his family moved to Melbourne, he made his appearance on the professional stage as a juvenile in Sinbad the Sailor (Theatre Royal). Over the next few years he found occasional work on suburban vaudeville programmes as "Boy Roy the Singing Soprano," and when his voice broke as "Boy Roy." Although he secured an engagement with Frank M. Clark in Melbourne while aged 16, his career during his teens was largely unremarkable. In 1910, however, he was noticed by entrepreneur James Brennan who subsequently gave him an opportunity to appear in Sydney at the National Amphitheatre. It was around this time that he changed his stage name from Boy Roy to Roy Rene (after the famous French clown). He remained on Brennan's circuit through until at least late 1911, with the engagement also including seasons in Melbourne (Gaiety Theatre beginning 15 May) and in Brisbane with Brennan's touring Vaudeville Entertainers Company (Theatre Royal, 18 Sept.). Rene returned to Melbourne for around a year before accepting a minor role as stable hand and jockey in J. C. Williamson's production of The Whip. After the production closed in Sydney he decided to remain in the city as he thought "there was more scope for [him] there," but in fact "found things even more difficult than [he] had working in the Melbourne suburbs."

Despite his optimism Rene recalls in his autobiography that he "found things even more difficult that [he] had working in the Melbourne suburbs" (41-42). Further to this he tells of his attempts and eventual luck in getting a tryout with Harry Clay. Within a few months he had proved himself enough to be included on the return leg of Clay's Queensland tour. Billed as a comedian and impersonator, performance reviews of the shows he appeared in indicate that he was a popular addition to the touring company.

During this time, too, he would no doubt have gained the benefit of guidance from the experienced Clay comedians - particularly Ted Tutty. Others to have appeared on the tour with Rene were Ward Lear, and the up and coming team of Les Shipp and Jim Gaffney. The advertising on the tour also notes that his comic line was in the tradition of Julian Rose, a Hebrew comic who had toured Australia on several occasions, and who was renowned for his turn "Levinsky at the Wedding." Rene notes in his autobiography that until the time he was with Clay in Sydney he'd never done a Jewish act at all. "I'd never thought of being a Hebrew comic." He further records:

It just simply had never occurred to me. After Clay, I was working with Jim Bain at the Princess Theatre, the Sydney one, when the cast kidded me into doing some imitations of Jordan and Harvey, and the famous Julian Rose.... I was working as a cornerman, still black-face, but I had learnt one of their numbers, "Yiddle on your Fiddle, Play Some Ragtime," and did it. Then I did an imitation of Julian Rose in his act "Levinsky at the Wedding." It was supposed to be an imitation of Rose, but I was no more like him than a fly in the air, though somehow with a black-face the act was a riot. What started out as a joke in the first place turned out to be the most important thing that ever happened to me in my career. That piece of black-face fooling led to my eventually developing into a real comic (45-46).

While Rene's account isolates this experience as being primarily responsible for his engagement with the Fullers soon after, it would appear (from both Rene and from reviews published in Queensland) that he first began to work a Hebrew line of act during his early engagement with Clay.

Roy Rene (as with most other performers) was not confined only to Harry Clay's circuit during his association with the entrepreneur. He is recorded, for example, as having appeared for other managements and venues, including the Melbourne Gaiety in November 1913, and the Lyric Theatre, Fitzroy in January 1914. He was also one of a select group of entertainers to perform at a special "smoke concert" for the Australian Terriers Society, a club for which his brother Albert Sluice (a prominent bookmaker) would later hold an executive position. Rene joined other established celebrities such as Leonard Nelson, Alf Edwards, and Levante in entertaining the large audience of members. There is no doubt, however, that he did work Clay's circuit fairly consistently during over this period, as indicated by the number of reviews found. By mid 1914 he was recognised as very much a senior attraction for Harry Clay, and as such his reputation and personality began to emerge enough that he was included in a "Can You Imagine" section of Australian Variety in its August 19th issue of that year. His inclusion simply asked "Can you imagine Roy Rene going to Church" (n. pag.).

Sometime between August and December of 1914, Rene undertook a brief engagement with J. C. Bain. It was while playing at the Princess Theatre for Bain that he came to the personal attention of Ben Fuller, who promptly signed him up. Although he indeed toured New Zealand for Fullers not long after starting with them (as several publications have noted), it would appear that he initially toured part of their Australian circuit, with reports of him appearing in Victoria (including Bendigo) during December of 1914 having been found. He returned to Sydney from New Zealand around November 1915, playing the Fullers National theatre in Sydney, and some twelve months later teamed up with Nat Phillips to form the iconic Stiffy and Mo - the rest being history.

Roy Rene and his fiancée Sadie Gale are believed to have begun their 1929 association with Clay's sometime in April, this being indicated by a reference in the May 8th issue of Everyone's to the fact that they "are now playing a starring engagement over the Clay circuit" (37). Previous to this Mo and his Merrymakers had been with Fullers, presenting a first part vaudeville and second part revue (with the company including at that time Mayo Hunter, the Hawaiian jazz band leader and multi instrumentalist). The Merry Monarchs, as they were also known, had been formed after the Rene and Phillips partnership had again broken up, this time in New Zealand during the 1928 tour. As with his Fullers' productions, Rene's company also provided the full show for Clay's.

According to an Everyone's par which highlighted the divorce proceedings against Rene, he and Gale received £70 per week on their present contract with Clay's. Referred to as Harry Vander Sluice, he apparently told the Registrar (in opposing the alimony increase from £10 to £15 which was being asked for by his former wife) that he held the fear "that when his Clay contract finished there would be difficulty in him securing remunerative employment because of the talkies" (31 July 1929, 39).

Almost immediately after he divorced his first wife Rene married Sadie Gale, and instead of a honeymoon the pair left for a north Queensland tour which was produced by Clay's. While the newspaper reviews of the tour found so far indicate that the tour was highly popular, Fred Parsons claims that "Mo was unfavourably compared with George Wallace, who had cut cane up there for a living." According to Parsons, "this rankled with Roy especially as George had been Sadie's first boy-friend" (27). [see *Chapter Five and Appendix C for further details on this tour*] Towards the end of the tour, too, Rene apparently began to showing the effects of an illness which eventually caused him to collapse on stage while playing in Clowns and Clover for Frank Neil in Melbourne shortly after the conclusion of the Clay tour. Although nearly dying, he eventually recovered and is known to have resumed his stage work some six months later.

While Roy Rene's association with Harry Clay and his company is relatively brief in comparison to his whole career, as he himself notes, his first period of engagement was in effect the start of his career as a professional comic - and an association which saw him adopt for the first time the Jewish persona that was to become his stock in trade. The influence of Harry Clay during these early days, and equally those of the experienced Clay comics, particularly Ted Tutty, Ward Lear, Arthur Elliott and Gilbert and Delavale to name but a few, was no doubt an important part of Rene's early development. The family atmosphere within the company - as Rene himself has described it - would more than likely have assisted in making the experience all the more positive

too. However, the fact that he was able to hold his own against the talents of the other Clay comics, and that he was also able to attract the attention of Ben Fuller so early in his career suggests that Rene's abilities as a comic entertainer were significantly advanced in comparison to many of his more experienced peers by that stage.

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- (Bridge Theatre, Newtown):- Roy Rene has established himself as a firm favourite, and does much to make the first part go; his songs are sure winners, and he has such a way with him on stage one has to look and laugh at him, which is a valuable asset to such a comedian (AV: 8 July 1914, 13)
 - (Bridge Theatre, Newtown): - Roy Rene does not get off under four songs nightly, which says well for this performer (AV: 15 July 1914, n. pag.).
 - (Bridge Theatre, Newtown):- Roy Rene and Ted Tutty share the applause for the first part - neither can be separated (AV: 22 July 1914, 6).
 - Roy Rene, the well-known akim-foo comedian and the originator of that beautiful phrase, "I haven't got a feather to fly with," left his end coat at home the other night. Being stuck up somewhat for the most desired article, he espied an old dummy used in farces hanging up on one of the flies. Promptly letting it down, he seized the bob-tail coat of the scarecrow and emerged triumphant, just as the rag went up. It fits him good, so he's hanging on to it (AV: 14 Oct. 1914, 7).
 - "Mo" will make his first appearance in Rockhampton. [He] has been credited with all kinds of gags, the same as car gags are hung on to Henry Ford and economic gags on to Harry Lauder. But "Mo" first and last, is a true humorist, and too clever to stoop to the vulgar gag. The fact of his starring for 15 years in all the principal theatres of Australia should be sufficient guarantee of "Mo's" entertaining abilities (MB: 17 Sept. 1929, 3).
 - The humour, though undeniably broad, was of the type on which these artists' reputations were gained, and was apparently expected by the crowd (MB: 23 Sept. 1929, 3)

AMY ROCHELLE

Soprano/ pantomime principal boy/child impersonations/pianist and musical comedy artist. Born on the 26 January 1898 in Sydney, Amy Rochelle is said to have received her early training at the NSW Conservatorium, and made her first appearance on the stage in 1912. Engaged by Harry Clay sometime around the end of 1914/early 1915, Rochelle continued working his circuit on a regular basis for the next four years, becoming one of the company's leading attractions. She toured Queensland with Clay's in 1915, and was selected for the finals of the 1916 Melba scholarship. During a Hugh D. Macintosh engagement at the Tivoli in 1918 Rochelle was spotted by the Fullers who then offered her the largest contract ever to an Australian principal boy to that date. Her last known engagement with Clay's was in January 1919. She remained with the Fullers until well into the 1920s as the company's leading Principal Boy. During that period Rochelle also expanded her vaudeville repertoire with child impersonations and as a pianist. When Roy Rene and Nat Phillips reformed the Stiffy and Mo act she rejoined their company, becoming one of its leading members for much of that period. She also toured New Zealand several times during the 1920s, and formed her own revue company in partnership with Stan Foley around 1929. Amy Rochelle is believed to have continued to perform into the 1930s. She was married to Harry R. Kitching, the editor of Australian Variety for many years.

Amy Rochelle's first known appearance on stage was at the Sydney Town Hall ca. 1912. By 1915 she had taken on an engagement with Harry Clay which also included a tour of Queensland that year. Her reception throughout the state was such that Clay sent her back the following year. In 1916 Rochelle was on the short list for a Melba Scholarship, but according to reports at the time her heavy schedule as one of Harry Clay's leading attractions meant that she was unable to make the selection finals. It was claimed in the trade journals that Madam Melba was contemplating a private audition to accommodate the new Australian "nightingale." By 1917 Rochelle was an integral part of Clay's No 1 Revue Co, if not one of the most popular acts playing the circuit. On the 9th of June that year, too, she married Harry R. Kitching, the Australian Variety editor, who also took on the role of her manager. Shortly after her marriage she became pregnant, but was found in the last stages of her pregnancy to be suffering from acute ptomaine poisoning the result being that she lost her baby a bare three days after it was born in February 1918. Reportedly having died several times, Rochelle spent some considerable period recuperating, finally returning to the stage in late 1918 with engagements with Clay's and later the Tivoli under Hugh D. MacIntosh's direction.

It was during her engagement on the Tivoli circuit that Rochelle was spotted by the Fullers. They immediately sought to engage her for their company and on the recommendation of Harry Clay she was offered the position of principal boy, with a contract said to have been the largest ever given to an Australian in that role to date. She began her career with the Fullers in their 1918/19 Christmas pantomime Babes in the Woods (replacing Queenie Paul in January of 1919), and following the end of the season played one final engagement with Harry Clay. During her time with Fullers, which lasted until around 1928, Rochelle rivalled Nellie Kolle as one of the company's leading Principal Boys, playing some eight or nine Christmas pantomimes in a row. She also became a major asset in the Stiffy and Mo Revue Co, while further expanding her solo repertoire with child impersonations and a

piano act. It was her singing, however, which made her the attraction she was. Indeed, she was seen by many critics of the day as the country's premier vaudeville soprano.

Rochelle retired from the stage for a brief time in 1920, returning to Fullers for their 1920/21 Melbourne pantomime season, in which she also wrote one of the production's songs. In August 1921 she began an engagement by John N. McCallum for his Town Topics company at the Cremorne Theatre in Brisbane (Bris). Given a welcome to the city by the Mayor and an enormous turn-out of people, her opening at the Cremorne saw an equally large number of people turned away from 3000 seat venue. The following year Rochelle again starred in a Fullers pantomime, this one being the Nat Phillips directed Mother Goose at the Hippodrome. She toured New Zealand in 1925 for the company, in addition to engagements with other managements.

In 1927 Rochelle joined the reformed Stiffy and Mo Revue Co, touring New Zealand with the troupe the following year. After the disbanding of that company she played the principal boy role in Little Red Riding Hood at the Empire (Syd), joined the Fullers Novellettes company (performing on their Australian circuit). 1927 also saw her form a partnership with Stan Foley that resulted in her opening at the Bridge Theatre, Newtown in revue. The theatre had been leased from Clay's by her husband. The last known performance found in the research for this thesis was her lead role in The Belle of New York at Her Majesty's (Syd) in March 1930.

* Queenie Paul as principal boy [Babes in the Woods, Fullers pantomime, Grand Opera House] was succeeded by Amy Rochelle, who is understood to have got the position on the recommendation of Harry Clay. With Mr Clay she had been a fixture for years. Miss Rochelle in age and appearance is still a mere girl. She has an attractive figure - tall and slight; and is distinctly good-looking. She speaks clearly, with full appreciation of the point in every line she utters and is easy and confident in all she does. Self-consciousness is unknown to her. But above all these recommendations is her singing. Her voice is remarkable for its pleasing quality, together with its range and power. Furthermore, her highest notes, flooding as it were the whole building, are taken without the least apparent effort. The use of her voice, however, is not free of certain vaudeville tricks; but except to the musically exacting her singing for this very reason must be all the more effective. While Miss Rochelle is to be congratulated on the chance she is getting with the Fullers the latter must similarly be congratulated on securing her services. For in her the firm named have an exceptionally fine principal boy. They might have sent to England or America without getting a performer to equal this Sydney-born girl. Certain it is that not within my memory has Australia seen a principal boy who in all-round qualifications for such a role can be said to surpass her (TT: Apr. 1919, 15).

- Amy Rochelle is no longer hidden in revue, but takes her place in Fuller vaudeville as a single performer. Miss Rochelle is a Sydney-sider with youth in her favour, and had her best opportunity to date in Fullers last pantomime at the Grand Opera House (TT: June 1920, 11).

- Amy Rochelle has all the qualifications for a successful principal boy - personality, presence, good looks, and a voice. But if she continues to let out her voice to its fullest extent - or to overwork it as she is now inclined to do - it will not always be the good servant it at present is to her (TT: Jan. 1922, 9).

- As a child impersonator, Miss Rochelle has no equal. If one closed their eyes and listened, you would think you were listening to a small child of tender years singing. She has all the mannerisms of a child, even to the child-like cough. Her child stories are of exceptional interest, as they are original, and it can easily be said they have never been heard before (TC: 15 Oct. 1924, n. pag.).

- Amy Rochelle is a great help to the show [Stiffy and Mo Revue, Fullers]. She sings many ballads in a charming manner. As playgoers all know, the versatile Amy is a musical comedy star with a powerful soprano voice, and her child impersonations are so life-like, that they have almost become classics. She received her musical education at the N.S.W. Conservatorium, and owes a lot to the advice of Antonia Dolores. One chronicles with pleasure her rise in the profession was due to merit and hard work, and a combination of vivacity and beauty, plus a voice of unusual beauty (JI: 2 July 1927, 28).

ART SLAVIN

Singer/comic/patter/song writer/revue and sketch writer/revue producer. Born in Sydney and a chemist by profession Slavin's association with Harry Clay was a significant one, lasting from around 1915 up until at least 1925. His first known engagements were for Harry Rickards (ca.1909), and with whom he stayed for some six years. Towards the end of his association with the Tivoli organisation he teamed up with fellow vaudevillian Lily Thompson to form an acts known as Slavin and Thompson. In 1915 the pair began working on Clay's Sydney suburban circuit, and later toured Queensland in 1917 and 1918, with Slavin acting as manager and producer on the latter tour. They stayed with Clay until 1919, and then began working for a variety of other organisations over the next four or five years, including the Fullers, eventually returning to the Clay circuit on a regular basis in 1924. Both Slavin and Thompson continued at Clay's into 1925. They are known to have a least one child, a son named Frank.

Little is known of Art Slavin's early career and background. It has been recorded that he was born in Sydney and that prior to entering the entertainment industry he was a chemist by profession. Around 1909 he began what was to be a six year engagement with Harry Rickards, which suggests that he had obtained some considerable experience and reputation leading up to his association with the Tivoli organisation. During his Rickards years, however, Slavin did work on other vaudeville circuits, one such occasion being in 1913 when he appeared in Newcastle for the Dix-Baker company. It is believed that sometime in 1914 he married Lily Thompson, a native of Melbourne and sister of Maisie Pollard. Thompson had herself appeared with the Pollard's Lilliputian company for many years, beginning as one of the children and ending as a member of Pollard's Juvenile Opera Co. She toured the East and through America with Mrs C.A. Chester, a daughter of Tom Sullivan (aka Tom Pollard), and later toured South Africa with the Harry Hall Lilliputian Opera Co. It appears that both Slavin and Thompson were on the Rickards circuit when they met.

Shortly after teaming up Slavin and Thompson began working for a number of other organisations including Bert Howard, J.C. Bain, Jackie Landow, the Fullers, and return engagements on the Tivoli circuit, with this situation lasting until sometime in mid 1915. Around that time they began their association with Harry Clay on his suburban circuit. The duo were well regarded for their comic songs and patter, and as such found a good deal of work with Clay, who in 1916 began expanding his circuit into regional NSW. Around this time, too, the revue began to emerge as a popular variety attraction, and in Art Slavin it found an enthusiastic writer. Indeed, over the 1916-18 period only Arthur Morley could be said to have perhaps written and produced more revues for Harry Clay than Art Slavin.

In 1917 Slavin and Thompson made their first tour of Queensland for Clay. The following year - which in fact became the last by the company for almost a decade - Slavin took on the role of Producer and Tour Manager, presenting several of his own revues, including the highly popular Casey's Ashes. The 1918 tour was also run with the assistance of Wally Edwards, who acted as Business Manager. The extent to which Slavin was regarded in the industry can be seen in an Australian Variety reflection, published in August of that year:

An Energetic Producer: - Art Slavin is a paragon of excellence in stage management, and the manner in which he conducts rehearsals. There is no time lost in idling around, but he gets to work right away. Furthermore, he uses no aggressive methods, but gets more done by his genteel methods (30 Aug. 1918, 7).

Sometime around 1919/1920 Slavin and Thompson left Harry Clay's circuit and while there remains a significant gap in their careers as far as the research for this thesis is concerned, they are believed to have continued playing throughout Australia and New Zealand during the first half of the 1920s, much of it apparently on the Fullers circuit.

In 1924 the pair returned to Clay's, with Slavin being known to have produced a number of revues for the company that year, including The Winning Ticket (ca. Sept/Oct), and in November he again presented one of his most popular pieces, Casey's Ashes across the circuit. Slavin continued to present shows for Clay's during the following year, although it is believed that at some stage during 1925 he found work in other areas.

As is the case with a number of other performers presented in this Appendix there has not been a great deal located with regard to Slavin and Thompson after 1925, although it is unlikely that Slavin in particular retired. However, it may well be possible that with a profession behind him that he could have returned to that, as the situation financially for variety artists during the last years of vaudeville certainly resulted in many leaving the industry.

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- (Dockum Street, Woolloomooloo): - As comedy waiters, Messrs Art Slavin and Bert Desmond caused endless amusement by their many interludes and quaint sayings, as an Irishman and as a Jew, and their topical song "1999," was most humorous. Mr Slavin's "cards" were responsible for a deal of laughter and interest... Slavin and Thompson (old Toowoomba favourites) had the audience with them the whole time they were on the stage, and blended patter, gags and paradoxical fragments harmoniously (TC: 2 July 1917, 7).
 - Slavin and Thompson, good people at all times; excellent work in the revue, and later on the programme is strengthened by their turn; good cross patter, and original vocal numbers, with added praise for the parodies from Art Slavin (AV: 18 Jan. 1918, n. pag.).
 - The features of the first part revue, Three Thousand Miles a Minute, are Art Slavin's staggersome make-up as a spiritualist, with big goggle eyes and a profusion of red, curly hair.... Mr Slavin is the life and soul of the revue (TT: Feb. 1918, 41).
 - The first portion of the evening's entertainment was devoted to an extremely funny revue [by Art Slavin] which provided a constant simmer of merriment.... Slavin and Thompson's comedy patter work was another feature of the performance (NM: 26 June 1918, 3).

Slavin's Spasm

Everybody's got the "Flu"
At-choo! At-choo! At-choo!
I'm trying to write this verse for -
At-choo! At-choo! At-choo!
Don't miss Clay's laughter show this week
If you're feeling sad or blue
It's no darned good, I can't write more,
At-choo! At-choo! At-choo!

(AV: 11 Oct. 1918, 17)

- Slavin and Thompson are a riot nightly; the former's parodies are with out doubt, excellent; and the latter is a dainty and polished artist, who always renders assistance towards making the turn a success (AV: 18 Oct. 1918, 11).
- Besides writing a lot of the Slavin-Thompson songs and patter, Mr Slavin was, at the time these lines were written, supplying Mr Clay with a second-half revue that made in all seventeen for that manager, from his clever, resourceful pen (TT: Feb. 1919, n. pag).
- Some original Slavin Patter:

Life is like a game of cards. We all take a hand in the game. The barber cuts, the shopkeeper deals, and the old maid goes alone. She tries to get a partner; but nobody will prop; and she's euchred every time. The butcher plays a plucky game. He plays for a good stake, and never loses his block. A baker never plays for fun, he always needs the dough. The navvy plays spades, and the sport plays clubs. The lover plays hearts; but he often has to use diamonds to take a trick. A little baby always reminds me of cards. The baby's the little joker, and his mother's the queen of trumps. If the little joker plays a crook game his mother takes him up, puts him across her lap, raises the right bower, and trumps the ace (TT: Feb. 1919, n. pag.).
- (Fullers): - Slavin and Thompson, a very pleasing lady and smart comedian put over a fine offering. The lady sings ballads, which the comedian himself wrote (TT: Oct. 1923, 18).
- The revue Casey's Ashes is entrusted to Art Slavin's direction, and he and his many lady and gentlemen confederates supply plenty of amusement in song, dance and jokelet. A word of praise is due to the careful manner in which these revues are mounted (TT: Dec. 1924, 17).
- (Princess Theatre): - Art Slavin's revue company is going strong with plenty of variety in The Wags (TT: Mar. 1925, 17).

GEORGE SORLIE

Theatre entrepreneur, dancer, singer, trick cycling, baton twirler, actor, comic. Born George Brown Sorlie on 7 February 1885 in Liverpool, England. Having grown up in Melbourne and Kalgoorlie Sorlie moved to Sydney ca 1903 looking to find work as a professional variety performer. One of his earliest engagements was with Harry Clay (ca.1903). Over the next decade he was associated with Harry Rickards (ca.1905), James Brennan (ca.1907), J. C. Bain (1912-14), Bert Howard (ca.1915), and was the elected president of the Australian Vaudeville Artists Federation (1913-14). Sorlie found much success in a partnership with Billy C. Brown (ex-Hugo's Buffalo Minstrels) on the Fullers circuit between 1914 and 1917. He married Grace Florence Stewart in 1915. Following Brown's return to America in 1916 Sorlie went back to performing a solo act, finding regular work with Beck and Howard and later just Bert Howard for much of 1917. During the years 1918 and 1919 Sorlie worked largely on Harry Clay's Sydney circuit, but from the early 1920s onwards he concentrated on touring his own companies under canvas. Over the next two decades established himself as Australia's "Tent Show King," staging musical comedies, pantomimes, vaudeville and drama productions around the country year in and year out. His entrepreneurial activities also included city-based operations. During his career, Sorlie contributed regularly to a number of theatre magazines, as correspondent, anecdotist and industry observer. He also recorded a number of songs for the Parlophone label in the later 1920s. George Sorlie died on the 19th June 1948, leaving behind his wife, who continued to tour (with Bobby Le Brun).

In an industry which required of its work force the ability to multitask, George Sorlie was with little doubt one of the most versatile. In addition to his principal comedy routine he could perform with expertise almost anything that was required. Dancing, acting, singing and juggling were just part of his overall repertoire of skills. He was also a noted trick cyclists and held three gold medals for "manipulating the baton," an act he did to great applause in the Anzac Day march of 1918 (27 Apr. 1918, n. pag). Sorlie's historical status today is largely that of Australia's leading tent showman. As with others of his era, those like Nat Phillips, Jim Gerald, Stanley McKay and George Wallace, George Sorlie's considerable reputation and achievements during his lifetime

have found very little recognition from historians. Even that which currently passes as an historical account requires further investigation as much of it erroneous.

The son of Frederick Sorlie and Sarah Jane (nee Rodick) Sorlie was of West Indian ancestry. The family migrated to Australia, settling first in Melbourne, and following the death of his father, Perth. By 1896 Sorlie was supporting his mother by singing in bars, halls and on the streets of Kalgoorlie during that district's goldrush period. In 1903 he moved to Sydney where he is believed to have made his professional start in that city with Harry Clay. It is not known how long Sorlie's initial engagement with Harry Clay (around 1903) lasted, although as he did not tour Queensland in 1904 he would have most likely been looking for, or have found, other work prior to the Clay closing down his Sydney operations in mid February. Brian Carroll, in his Australian Stage Album presents a record of Sorlie's initial engagement with Harry Clay:

In 1903, 18 year old George Sorlie faced the acid test of a one-night stand before the audience of Harry Clay's Newtown Theatre, where those who paid sixpence to sit in the gods had an unerring aim as they dispatched soft tomatoes and overripe eggs towards performers who failed to please them. When he had finished and no missiles came, veteran troupier Ted Tutty told him; "Boy you have been accepted by the most critical audience in Australia" (88).

Charles Norman, in When Vaudeville Was King also records that his "old friend Mr George Sorlie," (or the 'white Rajah' as he was often called), had joined Clay's when he first got to Sydney. However, Norman mentions the Bridge Theatre as the place where Sorlie first opened, a claim which is incorrect as Clay did not build his theatre until 1913.

Two years after joining Clay's Sorlie began his association with the Tivoli circuit, and over the next decade he appeared on the bills of other leading organisations, including James Brennan (ca.1907), J. C. Bain (1912-14), Fullers Theatre (1914-17) and Bert Howard (ca. 1915). In 1914, while also acting as President of the Australian Variety Artists Federation, he teamed up with Billy C. Brown, who'd previously been a member of Hugo's Buffalo Minstrels. The duo soon began to earn considerable critical praise and popularity, playing starring engagements on the Fuller circuit in both Australia and New Zealand. It was during this period, too, that Sorlie married Grace Florence Stewart (1915), the woman who would play an integral part in his later career as a travelling tent showman. Sorlie also reportedly operated a fruit shop in the city area of Sydney around 1916. Early in 1917 Brown was forced to return to America due to war repatriation orders, and Sorlie was subsequently left to continue performing as a solo act.

Sometime during 1917 Sorlie and his wife purchased Phillip Lytton's travelling tent theatre. However the expense of buying out Lytton was such that Sorlie was forced to take on work with other managements until he could afford to begin his own theatrical venture. He is believed to have initially played engagements on the Ike Beck and Bert Howard circuit around the middle of the year, followed by a contract with Howard after the pair ended their business relationship. This engagement lasted almost eight months. After ending his association with Howard sometime in late January 1918 Sorlie returned to Clay's. Although he remained with Clay throughout most of the year, he also returned briefly to play Bert Howard's circuit.

The reputation and experience Sorlie had by then gained was obviously appreciated by Harry Clay. A number of references indicate, for example, that he often acted in a de facto producer role, assisting less experienced performers and involving himself in many facets of the operation. The Theatre records, for instance that "at times his help towards the show is of a general nature, and he frequently assists a weak offering in a quiet but effective manner" (June 1919, 25). Australian Variety noted, too, that "besides being a very bit hit on the programme [Sorlie] is a great help to the artists in their numbers. Often when a turn is falling flat, George comes along with a little comedy during the song, which turns the number from failure, to one of the successes of the bill" (16 Aug. 1918, 11). His appeal was not always overwhelmingly appreciated, on the other hand, as the following review suggests:

George Sorlie ("The Chocolate Soldier") is over-confident. He thinks he has the audience captivated before he opens his lips, or without doing anything to first win their approval. Mr Sorlie is a good performer. But he is by no means so great that he can affect the cocksure attitude he took the night I heard him (TT: Mar. 1918, 33).

Reviews during this period suggest on the whole, however, that he was one of the circuit's star attractions. Indeed, he was often referred to as the "first part hit." By December of 1918 he had reportedly worked for Clay for fifty weeks straight, playing alternately the Princess and Newtown Bridge Theatres (TT: Dec. 1918, 32).

Sorlie is believed to have left Clay's company sometime during mid-1919. Having raised enough money to begin his own operations he and his wife finally put together a company that was initially known as George Sorlie's Musical and Dramatic Company. One of its earliest recorded seasons was in the North Queensland town of Mackay where it presented The Vendetta. Over the next twenty years Sorlie established his reputation as "King of the Road" with his musical comedies, pantomimes, vaudeville and drama productions crisscrossing the country year after year. He did not, however, contain his activities to the country areas only, as he is known to have been running shows from Balmain in 1924 (ca. Oct). Sorlie died on 19 June 1948, leaving behind his wife, who continued to tour (with Bobby Le Brun) for the next decade or so. During his career, Sorlie contributed regularly to a number of theatre magazines, as correspondent, anecdotist and industry observer, one of the earliest being, for example, his involvement in the first Australian Variety Christmas issue in 1915. In the late 1920s and early 1930s he espoused his views on numerous occasions in magazines, particularly Everyone's. It is known, too, that from the early 1920s onwards Sorlie made several recordings of his songs.

* The Era Comedy Four will be minus Billy Brown at the expiration of their present contract with the Fuller-Brennan management. The comedian will double up with George Sorlie, and if indications are anything, these boys are going to clean up with several routines of new and original business (AV: 8 July 1914, 7).

- Brown and Sorlie the coloured deliverers of the best essence of laughology are a scream this week, and during the whole time these two dandy performers are on view, the house is completely broken up from start to finish. As a double, you must hand it to these two boys as one of the best ever that has played Melbourne (AV: 24 Nov. 1915, 12).

- George Sorlie of Brown and Sorlie is now a partner in the fine and up-to-date fruit shop at the corner of Elizabeth and King Streets. He will probably confine himself to the industry now that Bill Brown is going back to America (AV: 13 Dec. 1916, n. pag.).

- (Bridge Theatre, Newtown): - George Sorlie is "some swell" in his evening dress, and his rendering of "Gungapin" [sic] was an eye-opener to many, who never thought George could do it to such big success. His number, "How I Beat Jack Johnson" (written by Ralph Weekes – Clay's drummer and arranger) was a winner (AV: 26 Oct. 1917, n. pag.).

- George Sorlie created quite a sensation on Anzac Day. He was leading the Musician's band. Dressed in full uniform, he cut a dashing figure, and his work with the baton was of great interest to all who witnessed his performance (AV: 3 May 1918, 4).

- George Sorlie is easily the first part hit at the princess (Railway Square). He had to sing five songs on April 20. A tuneful voice and an invigorating style are the means - or mostly so - through which Mr Sorlie succeeds in doing the trick (TT: May 1918, 33).

- Harry Clay and George Sorlie made quite a hit at the Princess Theatre last Saturday, when they did a double dance (AV: 10 May 1918, 3)

- "If you can stand it I'll sing it!" It was the retort of George Sorlie to a crowded house that clamoured for "Four and Nine" after he had already responded to no less than three recalls. "We're used to it," interposed someone in the audience. Said Mr Sorlie, "You ought to be." After a pause he added. "If there's anybody here who hasn't heard me sing it will he please stand up?" For a joke someone did, because for so long has Mr Sorlie been giving "Four and Nine" that it's inconceivable there is among Harry Clay's thousands of Sydney patrons one who hasn't heard of George's rendering of it - again and again. To the person standing up Mr Sorlie remarked amidst laughter, "There's a medal for you in the office." The song has assuredly never had in Australia the equal of Mr S. as a singer of it. Hence his sensational success in the clever, tuneful, humorous lines (TT: Feb. 1919, 27).

- For some time, George Sorlie has bet various sums that he could stand in his shop and tell the destination of various trams long before they got within his direct line of vision. At times he almost cleared the rent, as well as cleaning out his friends. But the secret is out. George sees the reflection of the destination-board in the shop opposite his, so now a fine source of revenue is no more! (AV: 1 Aug. 1919, 2).

ARTHUR TAUCHERT

Endman/comic/singer /acrobat/film actor. Born Arthur John McCormack Tauchert in 1877 at Waterloo (Syd) to Frederick and Norah Tauchert. Brother of Ida Tauchert, well-known minstrel singer who worked with Harry Clay during the 1890s (and wife of Jack "Porky" Kearns). Arthur Tauchert is first known to have worked with Harry Clay in 1914, and is believed to have continued with the company on a regular basis until around 1919. He toured Queensland for Clay's in 1915. Tauchert mostly worked solo, but at various times during his career he teamed up with other comics, including Bert Corrie and Ern Delavale. In 1919 he was the lead actor in The Sentimental Bloke, an Australian film based on the poems by C.J. Dennis. It was a role which made him a star across Australia. He followed this with a number of films over the next decade, including one based on another Dennis character Ginger Mick.

Arthur Tauchert was another vaudeville performer who successfully moved into other areas in the entertainment industry, becoming one of Australia's first film stars. His early minstrel career saw him work with virtually all the vaudeville managements operating at the time around Australia. Renowned mainly for his comic turns and singing as an Irish-style tenor (including divers ditties), he was also known to perform acrobatics, including neck and shoulder somersaults. Australian Variety records Tauchert's stage presence in a 1914 review: "Arthur Tauchert, the man in the black suit, brown suit, white suit, and not forgetting the purple vest, simply holds the theatre as he likes. By the way he is received, it looks as if he is going to be a landmark at Clay's for some considerable time" (20 May 1914, n. pag.).

In addition to engagements with Harry Clay's company during 1914 he is also known to have worked with Dix-Baker (Newcastle), as well forming, around the end of the year, his own Refined Vaudeville Company. The troupe included Lyla Thompson, Pearle Smaile, Sutton and Jamieson and Maud Stewart. During the earlier part of the year he also formed a brief partnership with Ernie

Delavale, following the latter's break from longtime partner Will Gilbert. Australian Variety records that "Tauchert has had a varied career with several partners, but this is the first time he has entered into a legitimate partnership" (8 July 1914, 13).

In 1915 Tauchert toured Queensland for Harry Clay, with Australian Variety noting that he was "the riot of each town [with] his class of business having caught on" (28 Apr. 1915, 3). During the year he also teamed up with Bert Corrie in a patter act. Although there has been no record yet found of Tauchert working with Clay's during the 1916-18 period, it is more than likely that he found work at some stage with the company during those years. He is known to have worked for Bert Howard in 1916, as well as running his own vaudeville company for a while. By May 1916 Tauchert had already become involved in the rapidly emerging Australian film industry, accepting a prominent role in a Jack Galvin film (during which he broke a finger while in a scene with Walter Jamieson, when the latter was required to throw Tauchert's character out of a showground). Australian Variety records that "Tauchert was so enthusiastic over the movie business, and put up such a showing that it is quite likely he will forsake vaudeville for the films" (3 May 1916, n. pag).

Arthur Tauchert's big opportunity came in 1918 when Raymond Longford cast him in the lead role of The Sentimental Bloke, with the film being shot during the middle of the year. The film was released in early 1919, with one preview suggesting that "Tauchert's acting in the locally-made movie is a revelation" and that a "fabulous amount has been offered by a leading theatrical firm for the rights of the said film" (AV: 3 Jan. 1919, 4). By the end of the year the entertainer's star was well and truly on the rise with his performance in the film roundly praised. The success of the venture saw Longford begin production on a second film during the year, with Tauchert again in the lead role. Based on C.J. Dennis' poem "The Moods of Ginger Mick," it was to be another huge success for a man now known by one and all as "the sentimental bloke." Tauchert continued to perform in vaudeville theatres during this period, working for several months on Frank Reis's circuit. In 1920 he joined Reg. Thornton's (the Kangaroosta) company the K-Nuts', playing the Blue Mountains before opening in Melbourne sometime around May.

Arthur Tauchert made a number of films over his career as well as his on-going commitment to vaudeville. These include: Films include: The Sentimental Bloke (1919), Ginger Mick (1920), Jackeroo (1920), The Dinkum Bloke (1923), The Digger Earl (1924), The Moth of Moombi (1926), Odds On (1928), Fellers (1930) and Showgirl's Luck (1932) aka Talkie Mad. It seems, however, that in the end his career (as with vaudeville) faltered, and he was apparently left destitute.

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- Arthur Tauchert... was the usual riot; as a knock-about endman he stands alone, some of his falls being almost real (AV: 21 Oct 1914, n. pag.).
 - (Bridge Theatre, Newtown):- Ted Tutty and Arthur Tauchert (John McCormick) again supplied the comedy and were the usual scream of the bill (AV: 17 Feb. 1915, 3).
 - (Toowoomba):- Arthur Tauchert is a tower of strength in the company. Clever and experienced, his "Pilgrims of the Night," in the first part (with encore) and contributory aid in the second session were heartily enjoyed (TC: 6 Apr. 1915, 6).
 - (Ipswich):- Comedian Arthur Tauchert in his original song "Jig-a-Jig" simply brought the house down. He certainly enhanced his already fine reputation (QT: 12 Apr. 1915, 7).
 - (Princess Theatre):- Arthur Tauchert with a taking makeup is good in his offering in the first part. As a supposed wild Indian, he greatly helps along the concluding farce (TT: June 1919, 25).

TED TUTTY

Cornerman/blackface act/singer/eccentric comedian. Born 15 May 1876 in Melbourne (Vic), Tutty was without doubt Harry Clay's most enduring artist, as well as being one of his most popular comedians. Although he found engagements with a variety of managements between 1905 and 1925, including the Fullers, the Tivoli circuit, Bert Howard, J.C. Bain, Harry Sadler, Frank Reis, Dix-Baker (Newcastle) and Jacky Landow, Tutty's career was dominated by his association with Clay's company, including seven QLD tours. Tutty toured the northern state in 1905-07, 1909-10, 1913 and 1915. Often referred to as "the simple chap" or the "tired comedian," he was very much an institution with Newtown audiences, and there was perhaps no more popular comic on Clay's QLD tours. He married Kate Cahill, another Clay artist (and who worked for many years under the stage name of Muriel Eskbank), in 1902 at Port Pierre (SA). He died on the 13th of April 1951 at Coogee, NSW. Jim McDonald wrote of Tutty's contribution and place in Australian vaudeville in Sydney's Daily Mirror:

Ted Tutty died a few weeks ago, and his passing severs the last link in the long chain of Australian born "black-face" comedians. These gentry comprised the bones and tamborine brigade of old-time minstrel show and music hall entertainment. In show virtuosity Will Whitburn and Charlie Fanning helped the native-born comics who worked under the banners of Harry Rickards and Ben and John Fuller. Ted Tutty was for many years the star cornerman on the circuit controlled by the late Harry Clay. He also worked the "Bigger Time" of Rickards and Fuller managements. He was about 80 when he died. I remember him as a quaint comic whose style was modelled on that of Whitburn, and like that old master Ted was also well to the fore in the side-

splitting farces which were a special feature of old time black-face comedy. His dry, croaking humour was well suited to this robust form of mirth-making. Tutty was the last of the great cornermen of the gay nineties. Pope, Sayles, Fanning, Whitburn, Wharton, Kearns, McKisson and Co. have long since passed. Now old Ted has joined them (Apr. 1951, n.pag.).

Ted Tutty began his career in Victoria and South Australia during the last years of the 19th century, developing a unique stage persona. Charles Norman recalls Tutty as having a broad voice, full of humour, and comparing him to Syd Beck (63). It was, he said in an interview for this thesis, a "most peculiar Aussie delivery," and one which "people used to mock" (Appendix H, 163). The Theatre in its May 1916 issue described his turn as "giving a first impression through his physique and style of a sick lizard smothered in charcoal through his unique makeup" (49).

Ted Tutty most often worked solo, but is also known to have formed several partnerships during his career at Clay's, including both Harry Clay and Maurice Chenoweth, the latter working with Tutty regularly during the years 1917 and 1918. He also worked for many years with his wife, billed either as the Tuttys or the Two Tuttys. Throughout his twenty or so year career with Harry Clay he regularly found engagements with other companies, having no trouble securing work with the larger organisations run by Harry Rickards and the Fullers, for example. His friendship with Clay, however, saw him return year after year to the Sydney and NSW circuits, as well as his quite regular tours of Queensland. In that state there was perhaps no bigger name in the blackface end-man business than Tutty. Billed as "everybody's favourite" he was "the one" so far as Toowoomba audiences [were] concerned," wrote one reviewer for the Toowoomba Chronicle in 1910, "and his rendering of 'You're The One' met with a wild reception, as did his encore, 'Robin Red Breast'" (TC: 15 Mar. 1910, 3).

In 1913 Tutty was included in a Theatre list of Sydney's "best-known stars" along with Con Moreni, Jack Kearns, George Sorlie, Joe Charles and Joe Rox, and around the same time he is known to have held an executive position with the Australian Variety Artists Federation. In 1913, too, Australian Variety, in a review of a Clay's Bridge Theatre show, reported that Tutty and a young Roy Rene both shared the applause for the first part - neither being able to be separated (22 July 1914, 6). By 1914 Tutty's reputation was such that Australian Variety wrote of him in relation to his appearances at the Newtown Bridge Theatre:

Ted Tutty is, without doubt, the biggest draw card that Harry Clay has ever had, and a sure riot every week; he has now broken all records, being in his 16th week, which speaks for itself as to his drawing power. He can always be depended upon for something original each week, and to do this requires some thinking out. Judging by the way he is going at the present time it is hard to say when he will get his ticket, but the War is certain to be over before he finishes (14 Oct. 1914, 7).

In 1916 Tutty joined the long list of vaudeville artists to have attempted the management game, taking over the Daceyville Theatre, with shows every Monday night. Tutty advertised that he took acts through Joe Lashwood's agency, and that he presented a "first-class vaudeville show." Australian Variety seemed to agree, noting in regard to the the initial production that the fine program resulted in a packed house (16 Aug. 1916, n. pag.). Tutty continued working around Sydney and other centres such as Melbourne and Newcastle over the next few years, also continuing to establish records for unbroken engagements with Harry Clay during the period. In 1917 he and his wife toured New Zealand for the Fullers. A reviewer, writing for Australian Variety wrote of a Wellington appearance:

In the vaudeville first part, The Tuttys appeared for the first time in a stereotyped act of cross-talk and patter. The writer got rather a shock for a minute or so, and had to rub his eyes, as the appearance of Mr Tutty brought back the bad old days of nigger minstrels. However, the artists managed to go over fairly well, and should become very popular (AV: June 1917, n. pag.).

On his return to Sydney, and Clay's, it is recorded that Tutty's on-stage reception was met with several minutes of applause. By November he had begun a partnership with both Charles Waite and Maurice Chenoweth, the latter to last several years to great success. "They have," wrote Australian Variety "established themselves as firm favourites as a double act, and nightly it is some time before they are allowed to leave the stage" (15 Feb. 1918, n. pag). By this stage, too, Tutty had become widely known around Australia and New Zealand through his engagements with other vaudeville establishments including, as previously mentioned, the Fullers' and Tivoli circuits, as well as through Bert Howard, Jacky Landow, Dix-Baker (Newcastle), Paddy King and Frank Reis, several of these managers having been associated with Tutty over the previous decade. Sometime during the 1918-19 period he again began running his own variety combination around the Newcastle area, made up in part by members of his family. As Australian Variety records: "Melvin, a Tutty offspring, who has a nice voice and appearance is the making of a good performer" (14 Feb. 1919, n. pag.). This venture was to create for Tutty his longest absence from Harry Clay's company, being almost a year in duration.

Tutty continued to work for Clays until around the time of Harry Clay's death, mixing his engagements with other managements, as had been the case throughout most of his career, including J.C. Bain (ca.1924). He also continued to work in partnership with his wife, and his daughters. Although he retired from the stage some years later, he was regularly called back to display his considerable talents up until his death in 1951, being known to have performed at Sammy Lee's Theatre Restaurant ca.1950 - his age being then some seventy years.

- (Ipswich):- Mr Ted Tutty, without whom - in the estimation of Ipswichians, at any rate - Clay's Waxwork's would be incomplete, broke out in a fresh place, in "You're the One," his reception proving that in the delighted hearers, he was "the one." He had to give a treble encore (QT: 23 Mar. 1910, 5).
- (Ipswich):- The appearance of the most favoured member of the company, Mr Ted Tutty, was the signal for an outburst, which grew in volume as he sang "I'll Put On My Coat" and "Sandy McIntosh." In the latter Ted appeared in a highly exaggerated Highland costume, and to a vocal imitation of the bag-pipe danced, in his own inimitable style, what was probably meant for the highland fling (QT: 27 July 1910, 7).
- Ted Tutty, a bigger riot than the war, causes more sensation and his cross talk with Harry Clay is a feature of the programme (AV: 12 Aug. 1914, 4).
- Ted Tutty is to Harry Clay what Irving Sayles was to Harry Rickards. Mr Tutty is with Clay patrons just the favourite Mr Sayles was with Rickards patrons (TT: Oct. 1914, 35).
- Ted Tutty, as usual, was the riot of the programme, and, without doubt, he is a drawing-card for the box-office (TT: 28 Oct. 1914, 6).
- During the week April 1-7 Ted Tutty at the Newtown Bridge Theatre had to strain hard to make a go of his song "You Wouldn't Believe." But what an effort it must be for a performer to get new songs practically every week the whole year round! Besides, in his succeeding number, "She Was Only Seventeen," he more than made up for any disappointment with "You Wouldn't Believe." Indescribably funny was his working of the second song. Besides the originality with which he sang it there was a touch of genius in the business with which he accompanied it. Mr Tutty is quite an institution with Newtown audiences. It is sufficient for him to come on the stage to set the whole house rocking with laughter. But his make-up, it should be added is always a treat in itself. Such are his physique and style that the first impression he gives you is that of a sick lizard smothered in charcoal. Mr Tutty has been so long with Mr Clay - and is evidently so well treated by that manager - that he doesn't appear to have ever had the least wish to try his luck under any other management. So patrons of other houses are thus deprived of the hearty laughs he simply couldn't help giving them. Years ago Mr Clay included Mr Tutty in the Tom-Dawson-Fred Bluett category of Australian performers. He is all that, and if anything a trifle more (TT: May 1916, 49).
- Was there ever a greater hit with Clay patrons than Ted Tutty, in his black-faced specialties, and as THE comedian in the finales? His reception at the Newtown Bridge Theatre during the week November 10-16 proved that he had merely to show himself to set the house in screams (TT: Dec. 1917, 45).
- Chenoweth and Tutty held the stage for quite a while with their bright and bidding fair to outdo Crawford and routine of patter, and their duets - eh; Caldwell (AV: 1 Mar. 1918).
- (Bridge Theatre):- Maurice Chenoweth and Ted Tutty are the hit of the bill. The screams of laughter they get set aside any doubt on that point (TT; Feb. 1918, 41).
- Ted Tutty's vein of comedy shows no signs of exhaustion; and his make-up as usual, is a feature of the turns with which he never fails to convulse the audience (TT; Apr. 1919, 28).
- Billy Cass is a very close second to Ted Tutty as the best man in the burnt-cork line in Australia. Both have instinctively that nigger comedy so rarely possessed by those who nowadays affect the minstrel make-up (TT; Nov. 1919, 28).
- The following is an extract from one of Ted Tutty's most popular songs, "She's Only Seventeen," and was published in the May issue of Theatre in 1916, 52.

I love a girl
A dear little girl
And she's only seventeen;
I love a girl
The same little girl -
And she's only seventeen!
I love her dearly -
I don't want her pelf.
I'd do anything
For her little self;
I'd lay down my life for her.
But I want it myself -

And she's only seventeen
Only seventeen
Only seventeen
She said, "I'll love you all my life.
Indeed you are my dream" -
And she's only seventeen
I love a girl
And she's only seventeen
I'm sorry to say
That I married this girl -
When she was only seventeen.

GEORGE WALLACE

Comedian revue producer and writer, musician, songwriter, singer, film actor, dancer, sketch writer, artist. Born on 4 June 1895 in Aberdeen, NSW, George Wallace was one of Australia's most popular variety and revues comedians of the 1920s, and went on to establish an equally impressive film and radio career during the 1930s and 1940s. He began his professional career in his early twenties after having spent a number of years in North Queensland as a farmhand and cane cutter. He initially toured with a small time variety troupe and spent some time in Brisbane before moving to Sydney around 1919 where he secured his first major vaudeville contract with Harry Clay. In early 1920 Wallace teamed up with Jack 'Dinks' Patterson to form Dinks and Oncus. Wallace moved from Clay's to the Fullers in 1924 following the break-up of the Dinks and Oncus partnership. Within a short time he established himself as one of that company's top draw cards, touring both Australia and New Zealand constantly up until the late 1920s. Although surrounded by a quality ensemble of comedians and singers, Wallace naturally dominated the troupe, not only as principle comedian, but also as writer, occasional songwriter and director. After the Fuller's company folded Wallace moved to the Tivoli circuit (earning around £120 per week). His versatility saw him take up opportunities in a number of different entertainment fields from the 1930s onwards, including musical comedies, film and radio. He appeared in several high profile musicals in the early 1930s and later starred in five popular comedy films. One of his greatest successes was the original composition – the classic war-time song "A Brown Slouch Hat." He appeared in minor roles in two dramatic films, one of these being *The Rats of Tobruk* (1944), and in 1949 was given his own weekly radio series on the Macquarie network. Wallace retired in 1957 and died in 1960 in Sydney. He was survived by his son, George Wallace Jnr.

George Wallace is a one of the great examples of vaudevillian versatility, perhaps not in the same league as George Sorlie, but there would have been few who would have wished to separate them during their careers. Wallace, along with Sorlie, Roy Rene, and Jim Gerald, completes the quartet of leading Australian performers to have worked this country's stages during the great era of vaudeville and revue. Isadore Brodsky in *The Streets of Sydney* records one of Wallace's early engagements, most likely around the time he was a cane cutter in north Queensland and aged about sixteen.

Wallace has told the story of how he worked his way into a troupe self-described as the "greatest show on earth." The company consisted of Happy Harry Salmon, his wife and two others. It was at Walkerstown in Queensland. George had a pal named Jock McFarlane who engineered the engagement by this piece of strategy. "Can any of the fellows in your show dance?" he asked Happy Harry, with George discreetly hidden. "My oath," [replied Harry]. "I know a pal here who will dance any of your crowd for a quid," was Jock's rejoinder. "Trot him out. I take you." declared Happy Harry. George came out of hiding, clambering onto the boards and "thanks to heavy boots and a good sounding stage" won the bet for his friend and a job for himself - a pound a week and keep (130).

Only 5'5" (1.63m) tall (in his later years it was said that he was nearly as wide) Wallace was renowned for his physical humour - being able to fall better than almost anyone else in the business. Further to this, his comedy was acknowledged as being rather less sophisticated than many of his peers. His technique lay in presenting a more innocent type of persona and taking full advantage of his expressive eyes and his country sayings.

George Wallace began his life on stage at age three in a family song and dance act. His father, also George Stevenson Wallace, (and known professionally as Bronco Wallace) was a painter who turned to minstrel entertainment as a comic and equilibrist. Broncho eventually established a successful act with George Scott around the turn of the century. Although George Jnr's act (not to be confused with his own son Wee Georgie Wallace – later known as George Wallace Jnr) was very much a country character, much of his youth was spent in Sydney, where he often busked on the Pyrmont waterfront. He later moved to Manly when his mother remarried. After spending some four years in his stepfather's ink factory Wallace went back to the country, a period which saw him work as a cane-cutter amongst other jobs. It has been said that "the dry wit of the outback nurtured his comic sense and timing" (Parsons and Chance 628), and indeed his stage appearance - often consisting of checked shirt and old battered hat - was very much an image cultivated from his bush experiences. His topics were not, however, entirely devoted to the country - with some of his most popular exploiting urban and foreign subjects.

Wallace married Margarita Edith Emma Nicholas in Brisbane in 1917 (they separated in 1924) and the following year moved back to Sydney where he eventually found an engagement on Harry Clay's circuit. He was apparently given the opportunity after an unpaid trial of acrobatic clog-dancing at the Bridge Theatre in early 1919. During his early days he worked on stage with his wife, as one of the earliest references found to date shows. The double act with his wife did not last long, however, although his son, Wee Georgie Wallace, made semi-regular appearances on the stage with him over the next five or so years, and in later years worked an act of his own. In June 1919 the *Theatre* described Wallace's "clever clog-dancing as... reminiscent of the days of Dan Tracey" (25), and the following year wrote: "His female impersonations have the house in shrieks all the time he's on the stage" (TT: Jan. 1920, 26). A few months later, however, Wallace joined forces with another Clay comedian, Jack Patterson, to create the most famous of the company's home grown acts. Indeed, as Katherine Brisbane notes, they had no equal in being "so well remembered purely from appearances there" (178).

There has been some confusion regarding the exact date that Dinks and Oncus first teamed up, with it being suggested, for example, that they formed in 1919 (Parsons and Chance 191; and Sayers 365). As Chapter Four of this thesis has noted, however, an *Australian Variety* review dated 27 May 1920 indicates that they had only been together a few weeks at that stage.

[Wallace] has doubled up with Dinks Patterson, and went a riot. As they have only been together a couple of weeks, we hate to think what they will give patrons in, say, a couple of months. No bigger laugh has ever appeared on the Clay time (8).

Within a year Dinks and Oncus had become Clay's biggest attraction, playing to packed houses and rivalling Stiffy and Mo for the "mob's" favoritism. Pint-sized Wallace was in marked contrast to the incredibly tall and skinny Patterson, and combined with their knock-about comedy, containing lots of falling around, drunken antics, and outrageous boxing displays, helped create many hilarious routines.

Charles Norman recalls the Wallace and Patterson partnership in his book When Vaudeville Was King:

When George was beginning to be talked about as an excellent comic he was teamed with another comedian, a man from the First World War, Dinks Patterson. Dinks was a tall, very thin comedian with a nose that somehow got in the way of a breach loader gun, or so it seemed. But he was one of the most likable blokes you'd meet from here to the Cape. This tall and self-effacing character was a gifted funny man. He had a voice that tended to rise to falsetto when aroused in blow-up comedy situations. "What's the matter with you?" he'd call. They were a perfect foil for each other, screamingly funny and seemed destined to become a world famous comedy team (105).

Patterson and Wallace continued to fill the theatres for Harry Clay up until the end of their partnership sometime in 1924. It seems, however, that Jack Patterson's role in the team had been gradually reduced during the two or so years prior to their splitting up. By around mid 1922, for instance, Clay had begun advertising "Oncus and his Merry Company," (TT: June 1922, 17) no doubt due to Wallace's increasingly influence on the writing of material, and as a developing revue director. This would have no doubt rankled Patterson, and may well have contributed to his decision to split up the team after what Charles Norman describes as a minor misunderstanding over a practical joke. [see Chapter Four pages 89-90 for further details] After the pair ended their partnership, Patterson formed an act with his wife, Trixie Ireland, and worked for several years over in the United Kingdom before returning to Australia. He also became a revue producer and carved out a successful career in variety and revues, occasionally partnering other comedians in acts. He was not, however, able to match the success that his old partner found, and unfortunately there has been little found to date regarding his career past the early 1930s.

During his final years with Harry Clay's company, George Wallace developed his skills in the area of revue directing, experiences through which he found much success in later years on the Fullers' circuit. At some stage, too, his younger sister, Babe, worked on the circuit - she being known to have done the occasional act with Charles Norman while he was on Clay time. It has not been determined when he eventually left Clay's, although reviews in Everyone's over September 1924 indicate that George Wallace's Revue Company had been appearing at the Fullers' Majestic in Newtown since at least August.

Although Wallace left Clay's for the more lucrative offerings under the Fuller regime – his initial contract for a tour of New Zealand was £20 per week. He soon began to rival Roy Rene and Jim Gerald in the comedy stakes, however. Interestingly, Fred Parsons, in A Man Called Mo claims that Wallace was in 1929 "a very minor comedian, half of a comedy act called, of all things, Dinks and Oncus" (7). His recall here (as with most of details regarding Roy Rene's career prior to 1936) is highly questionable in light of the fact that not only had the Dinks and Oncus act been dissolved for some four or so years, but that Wallace was far from being a "very minor" comic.⁴ That George Wallace's reputation was by then considerably well-established is indicated by the strength of his company during his early Fullers' days, when the troupe included among others the highly respected Marshall Crosby. Further to this he is known to have taken the troupe across to New Zealand in October of 1924 where they were accorded much acclaim.

With vaudeville's popularity declining in the late 1920s Wallace's versatility allowed him the opportunity to enter a number of new fields, including musicals. He was cast, for example, in Collits' Inn opposite Gladys Moncrieff in 1933 and also had a major role in The Beloved Vagabond (1934). As a lead actor he appeared in several successful films during that decade and in the 1940s worked on the Tivoli circuit (earning around £120 per week), while also appearing in two dramatic films. George Wallace's filmography is: His Royal Highness (1932), Harmony Row (1934), Let George Do It (1938) Gone to the Dogs (1939), The Rats of Tobruk (1944) and Wherever She Goes (1951). As a song writer, one of his most successful tunes was "A Brown Slouch Hat." By 1949 Wallace also had a weekly radio series on the Macquarie network. He retired in 1957 and died in 1960 in Sydney. He was survived by his son.

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- The Two Wallaces very inexperienced, bad routine and mixed up turn (AV: 24 Jan. 1919, n. pag.).
 - George Wallace is gaining applause for his smart dancing and good comic songs. Since his opening, he has made rapid strides towards success (AV: 11 Dec. 1919, n. pag.).

⁴ See Footnote 1, page 124.

- Dinks Patterson, who is one of the tallest members of the vaudeville profession, did a couple of new songs in the first part, and also put on a laughable sketch in the second, and which went over "good-oh" (AV: 12 Feb. 1920, 12).
- George Wallace: Yes, I'm acquainted with your wife, old man. I knew her before you married her.
Dinks Patterson: Ah, that's where you had the advantage of me - I didn't (AV: 24 June 1920, 5).
- Dinks and Oncus stopped the show in their inebriate sketch at the Gaiety and had to take no less than four bows before the pleased patrons would allow them to retire (AV: 17 Sept. 1920, n. pag).
- George Wallace says he has a century of the best to say that his partner, Dinky Patterson, can get a decision over Sid Godfrey in a twenty-round route, or he will have a four spar with him any night at the Gaiety just for old times sake (AV: 22 July 1920, 21).
- Dinks and Oncus ("The Two Drunks") never once become dull. They go from laugh to laugh, and get an exceedingly good reception (TT: Aug. 1920, 9)
- George Wallace must have made a fine impression throughout New Zealand, as visitors from the dominion, when referring to Fuller shows, never fail to mention the success the little comedian made in their country, where his style of comedy was so much appreciated (E: 12 Nov. 1924, 39).
- (Fuller Theatre):- The first appearance of the George ("Onkus") Wallace revue company at this theatre revived memories of the business done by Stiffy and Mo, inasmuch as both houses last Saturday played to capacity... As an entertainer Wallace is of the highly eccentric order, and with his extraordinary dancing and acrobatics, vies with the best revue company at present on the circuit; and this is saying something in view of some exceptionally talented performers (E: 4 Mar. 1925, 30).
- George Wallace Jnr, five year old son of the comedian at the Fuller Theatre, was another small-sized riot at the Hippodrome last Saturday. For his years he is a mental and professional marvel. Three generations of Wallaces have now made history in Australian vaudeville, i.e. "Broncho," "Oncus," and now "Wee George" (E: 18 Mar. 1925, 36).
- George Wallace has immense personality. In addition, he is refined and, last but not least, has a delicious sense of humour. Only one thing he lacks; he has not yet, as it were, "found himself." At the present moment his style of humour is nondescript - his fun is spontaneous without being individual. In other words, he has not as yet had a sufficiently wide experience to adopt a brand of humour which is distinct enough to be imitated. That time has yet to come, however, Remember these words and watch.... George Wallace is undoubtedly a gold mine for the Fuller firm (TT: Apr. 1925, 15).

APPENDIX G

SURVEY OF ARTISTS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATED WITH HARRY CLAY

NB: All artists (except Walter Bentley) have had their entries updated and expanded for Clay Djubal's 2005 Ph D thesis "What Oh Tonight). See: <http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:107238> (Appendix D)
The same artists' entries in the Australian Variety Theatre Archive are being updated whenever new information is identified.
See: <http://ozvta.com/> (or at Pandora <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-143747>)

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This appendix includes information concerning several artists and/or performers whose association with Harry Clay and his company can be considered significant. In this sense each had a business or professional relationship which was not just one of an employee, partner or performer (as several did at one stage or another find engagements with Clay in one or more of these areas during their earlier careers). Little if any research has been directed towards each of those included, and thus this appendix (as with the others) has been presented in order to provide a reference point for any further historical surveys into either the individuals themselves, or Australian vaudeville and theatre in general.

The list, and indeed each separate file, cannot be considered comprehensive but simply reflects the amount of source material located during the primary research undertaken for as part of the Clay project, and hence gaps in the information unfortunately exist.

IKE BECK

Ragtime singer/hard shoe dancer (tap)/vaudeville manager/ entrepreneur. Referred to as "The Fashion Plate." Beck began his professional career in 1916, entering into management sometime in late 1916/early 1917 - first on his own and then with Bert Howard later in 1917. The Beck and Howard partnership did not last long, however. Following the split Beck began operating his own circuit in the Hunter Valley district, but by 1918 had divested himself of that enterprise. He is known to have shortly afterwards taken a company on tour through Queensland. During the period 1918-19 he was again performing for a number of managements, including Harry Clay, and by 1920 had returned to management in the Newcastle and Hunter regions, establishing his operations there with some success. Beck sold his circuit to Harry Clay in 1922, only to take it back a year or so later.

Ike Beck entered the world of professional vaudeville entertainment in 1916, presenting a ragtime singing and hard-shoe dancing (tap) act at the Princess Theatre in October. By mid-1917 he had installed himself as financial partner and manager in some of Bert Howard's ventures, including a Sydney suburban circuit - showing pictures and vaudeville. Beck was even then beginning to display considerable promise in entrepreneurial matters despite being so new to the business. Australian Variety published a brief account of his and Howard's career to that date, writing of the latter:

Ike Beck is a comparative newcomer to vaudeville... Amongst the sporting fraternity Beck has a big following, and is popular with all. His taste for good dress is well-known, and he has often been referred to as "The Fashion Plate." As a vaudeville manager, he already displays a wide knowledge of what is needed, and as he is not afraid to invest capital in his various ventures there is every reason to believe that he will be eminently successful (16 May 1917, n. pag).

Beck was also reportedly making an appearance in a film by Jack Garvin around this time, with Fred Bluett in a lead role. By around September 1917, however, it seems that the Howard and Beck relationship had become somewhat untenable, the pair severing their connection at that time- although apparently in a reasonably amicable manner. Despite being new to the game, Beck

was still able to engage some respectable names for his newly formed circuit, including Arthur Tauchert, Alf. Edwards, Louie Duggan, Ted Tutty, Joe Charles and Emily Dani, and Kitchie and Kliftie.

While continuing to run the Redfern Picture Palace in late 1917, Beck made a move to extend his circuit to the Newcastle area. His operations, known as Ike Beck's Vaudeville Enterprises, were being run out of 9 Commercial Chambers, 80 Bathurst St, Sydney. By the end of the year it is reported that he was doing "remarkably well around the Newcastle districts" (AV: 14 Dec. 1917, n. pag.). He continued presenting vaudeville on his Hunter circuit until April, at which time he sold his interests and left for Queensland with a troupe that included Tauchert, Little Sadie, and the Coleman Sisters. After the tour ended Beck returned once more to performing, finding engagements with several companies including Harry Clay, for whom he worked during the 1918-19 period.

Sometime around mid-1919 Beck again began operating a Newcastle and Hunter circuit, and by August had a No 2 company touring Northern NSW, including the towns of Werris Creek, Tamworth, Murrurundi, Narrabri, Gunnedah and Boggabri. His expansion also saw him running two companies in the Hunter by the end of the year, some of the artists on his books being Gale and Sadie, Porky Kearns, Shipp and Gaffney, Joe Archer and the Coleman Sisters. In March of 1922 Harry Clay took control of Beck's Hunter operations, including the towns of Cessnock, Wallsend, West Wallsend and Maitland. However, by April the following year Beck was once again running the circuit.

Ike Beck's career after 1923 is presently unclear, as are a number of other details regarding his life and his influence in the vaudeville industry. He can, however, be considered one of the more flamboyant of the smaller vaudeville managers, and one seemingly never satisfied with sitting still.

- (Princess Theatre): - Ike Beck is now in his second week, and works with much more assurance; as a dancer he is in the A1 class; and gets a big applause for his clever work (AV: 25 Nov. 1916, n. pag.).

- Ike Beck is making his appearance in Jack Garvin's picture, in which Fred Bluett is featured. Our Chaser pal promises to be a big drawcard in the production (AV: 30 May 1917, n. pag.).

- **"A Week With Ike Beck Around the Suburbs"**
by Presto

In doing a week for Ike Beck,
I packed up my props and my clothes
And, on Saturday, at Mascot,
(To a big crowd) with the old red nose

Now it's not too warm out at Mascot
But the actors they all didn't care,
Just as long as they pleased the audience,
And got their cut of the cash that was there.

Now Monday of course is an off night,
Ike having no place for to show,
But it's only a matter of some little time,
When every night he'll be on the go.

On Tuesday, at the meeting place,
The actors all did gather,
And took the trip to Auburn fair
On a wagon, in fine weather.

Cel Delwyn said: "Who'll drive the mokes?"¹
Levarto said: "Don't worry!"
When Tauchert cried: "Why, I'm the man!"
But Ike said: "You'll be sorry;"

We started off, and all went well
So merry and so bright,
Fat "Jamo" said: "I wouldn't care
If my leg was only right!"

On Wednesday night the Wee McColls
Were repeatedly called back,
And everything was going fine
Till something went off black.

At Lewisham on Thursday night –
The same old mob and horses,
And when "The Goat" commenced to sing,
She nearly burst her.....

But leaving there we had some fun,
With someone singing high,
And all at once our old mokes fell,
And Verlie heaved a sigh.

Granville was the final show,
And sorry all were we,
And Bob said: "What about the fares?"
Ike said: "Leave that to me!"

If Ike continues on this game,
A Fuller may he be,
And may we live to see the day,
When a city show has he.

(AV: 15 Aug. 1917, n. pag.)

¹ Moke was the name given to a donkey or small horse

- Ike Beck is a very busy man nowanights, particularly as he is extending his circuit to the Newcastle suburbs. In the meantime, the Refern Picture Palace is the big draw for the pay-roll, and the other of Beck houses also report excellent business (AV: 16 Nov. 1917, n. pag.).
- Ike Beck is enjoying a spell in town prior to re-opening around the suburbs. In the meantime his combination at Newcastle, and the outlying districts is doing particularly fine, and Ike may now claim to have established a permanent circuit of houses there. Nobody is more deserving than this small-time manager, whose energy, perseverance and obliging manner is gradually bringing him to the fore (AV: 8 Mar. 1918, n. pag.).
- Artists who have just returned from the Ike Beck Circuit speak in glowing terms of the manner in which Ike treats them. "One of the most comfortable and pleasant two weeks engagement I have ever had," says Chady. A little bird off Jim White's hat tells us that Ike has started a No Three banking account. Well, Bo, you tried hard, and like Sir Robert Bruce, it looks as if you have won. Perseverance, ability and honesty of "purpose" must win in the long run. Good luck (AV: 28 Mar. 1919, 9).
- Ike Beck, the well-known fashion-plate dancer [has] after many strenuous months around the Newcastle district established a No 1 company that has provided very fine programmes to delighted patrons. Mr Beck is going further afield, and for this purpose has just organised a No 2 company of Australian artists who will go on a comprehensive tour commencing at... Werris Creek, with Tamworth, Murrurundi, Narrabri, Boggabri and Gunnedah on succeeding nights.... It is pleasing to note the success of one who has battled on in the face of big odds, and a legion of friends will admit that this success is well merited (AV: 3 Sept. 1920, n. pag.).

WALTER BENTLEY

Actor/Manager/Elocutionist/Teaching Academy Principal/Producer/Actors' Association of Australia Secretary and President /NSW Shakespearian Association Secretary and President/Public Speaker. The son of Rev. Dr James Begg, one of the leaders of the Free Church of Scotland, Walter Bentley was born William Begg in Scotland in 1849. After spending several years in the merchant navy and on a Queensland sheep station he settled in New Zealand, and became involved in theatre. Bentley returned to London around 1874 and not long after became associated with Henry Irving. Using the name Walter Bentley he toured several British provinces, establishing a reputation for dramatic acting, and in particular with his Shakespearian characterisations. After touring America for some three years as the lead actor in a company which presented, among other things, The Silver King, he returned to London (ca.1886) for an engagement at the Grand Theatre, after which he again toured the provinces prior to leaving for Australia. In 1891 Bentley presented a successful debut season of Hamlet at Melbourne's Theatre Royal, and by 1893 his Australasian tour had seen him twice visit New Zealand. In 1898 he returned to tour the Australian states and New Zealand, and at one stage ran a dramatic acting school in Brisbane, as well as organising various public entertainments and running for parliament. His career continued as both an actor and an orator throughout the early 1900s, with much of it believed to have been spent back in the United Kingdom. In 1909 he returned to Australia for the third time, with this tour including his excursion through Queensland under the auspices of Harry Clay. In late 1909 Bentley settled in Sydney, setting up his own College of Elocution and Dramatic Acting and presenting regular performances with his students. Bentley became a prominent member and official of both the Actors' Association of Australia and the Shakespearian Society of New South Wales. He also contributed a number of articles and viewpoints to the trade journals during his later career, in addition to appearing at and organising numerous benefits to Australian actors. In 1916 he once again failed to win a seat in Parliament, and during the war years, too, was noted for his considerable public contribution. Bentley died on the 19th of September 1927, having taken his own life after some period of ill health.

Walter Bentley can be considered as one of the leading exponents of Shakespearian character acting to have toured the Australasian regions during the two decades which span the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. A contemporary of George Rignold, Alfred Dampier and Julius Knight, he was seen by his contemporary critics as having been significantly influential in helping to raise the level of professional acting in Australia. In many respects it was not only through his efforts as an actor and director, but perhaps more so through his tireless work within the industry as a teacher, public speaker commentator, and prominent member of several theatrical associations. His willingness to contribute to the financial support of other fellow actors and the community at large also saw him given recognition during the years he spent in his adopted country.

Bentley was born William Begg at 51 Minto Street in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1849. His father Rev. Dr J. Begg, a rigid Presbyterian and one of the founders of the Scottish Free Church, was also renowned as a public speaker and intellectual. Bentley's aunt was philanthropist, Emily Faithful. He has also claimed to have been a descendant of Scottish poet, Burns. It appears that William, from an early age, desired an opportunity to enter the acting profession, at one stage attempting to use the influence of his famous aunt in order to get a position. John Plummer, a founding editor of the London Figaro records, however, that the situation was such that he found it impossible to get a start (TT: Dec. 1909, 10). Not long afterwards he was instead articled to Messrs. George Thompson and Co, for whom he spent some time voyaging to different parts of the world. After an argument on board the White Star liner "Colonial Empire," which was berthed in Port Jackson (Australia), young Begg jumped ship and later found employment on a sheep station out of Rockhampton through the efforts of Robert Towns and Sir Alexander Stuart. By 1870 he had moved to New Zealand where a brother, F. F. Begg, was already living - he being in the banking industry. Bentley found employment in New Zealand as a valuator and general agent for the Clay Council in Dunedin. On one occasion, however, he found himself stepping into the breach as it were, to help out his brother who had been engaged to play Mr Potter in an amateur production of Still Waters Run Deep. The brother's fiancée apparently had such an aversion to anything theatrical that she

threatened to break off their engagement unless he relinquished his involvement. William took on the role, believed to have been presented at Dunedin's Princess Theatre, and subsequently altered the course of his life.

Within a year he had taken the plunge and become a professional actor at the old Princess Theatre, Auckland. Writing to the Theatre in 1910, Jimmy South recalls seeing the comedy Love's Sacrifice presented by Bland Holt's father sometime around 1872, and in which Bentley played St. Leu - this being one of his very earliest professional performances. Smith also recounts that Bentley's father had come out from Scotland, and that it was understood that he "had parted up a sum of money so that the son might be given a show" (June 1910, 8). This seems to be contrary to the 1909 article by John Plummer, who knew both Bentley and his father, and in which he claims that William took to the stage "despite the vigorous remonstrations of his father" (TT: Dec. 1909, 10). By 1874, and having at one stage become the lessee of the Prince of Wales Theatre in Auckland for a season, the young actor returned to London. Now using the name Walter Bentley, he set about establishing his career in the United Kingdom, at first obtaining an engagement with Charles Wyndham and Marie Lytton at the Royal Court Theatre where he is known to have performed in Herman Merivale's farcical comedy, Peacock's Holiday. John Plummer recalls seeing this production and remembers the comment of John Huy, the theatre's cynical stage manager (as far as a new candidate's prospects were concerned, that is) saying, "there's something in him" (TT: Dec. 1909, 10).

In early 1876 Bentley secured a position as a juvenile lead in Henry Irving's Lyceum Company, and is known to have played supporting roles to Irving in Hamlet, Charles I, The Bells, Richard III, (Jan. 1877), Louis XI, Richeleiu (May 1876) and Tennyson's Queen Mary (Apr. 1876), as well as touring the provinces during the latter half of 1876. John Plummer records that the extremely fastidious Irving recognised in Bentley a player of exceptional ability and told him (Plummer) that "the British stage would be all the better for a few more men of his stamp" (TT: Dec. 1909, 10). Bentley's recital of Clarence's Dream in Richard III was said to have been one of the features of the great 1877 production (SMH: 20 Sept. 1927, 12).

When Irving and Mrs Bateman dissolved their partnership at the Lyceum in 1878, Bentley joined the latter's company (then based out of Sadler's Wells), and toured the provinces for her for some period of time. Over the next few years, too, he found engagements in London and the provinces, including a supporting role as Asa Trenchard, to E.A. Sothorn's famous Lord Dundreary in Our American Cousins at the Haymarket Theatre, London. Bentley later undertook his own tour of the UK, including in his repertoire a considerable number of Shakespearian characters and carrying with him special scenery and dresses. He did not, however, confine himself to only Shakespeare, but constantly added to his repertoire many of the standard dramas of the day. Another of his acclaimed roles around this period of his career was in 1882, when he partnered the Italian speaking Madame Ristori in Macbeth during her London season. He is believed to have played several other leading roles with Ristori during this time, too, including Leicester to her Queen Elizabeth.

Between 1883 and 1885 (approximately) Bentley toured the United States with productions such as The Silver King, Burr Oaks, and Love or Money, eventually establishing a reputation as one of the finest actors to have played Wilfred Denver in The Silver King. He had apparently taken on the role in Chicago following Osmund Tearle's season in San Francisco. Upon returning to the United Kingdom in 1886 Bentley once again ensconced himself in London with a season at the Grand Theatre, later touring British provinces until presented with an offer by George Coppin to tour Australasia in 1891, whereupon he arrived in Melbourne to present Hamlet at the Theatre Royal in a reportedly successful season. He then travelled to New Zealand before returning to Australia where he opened in Sydney, with Hamlet and The Silver King as the main productions. This season was then followed by a tour of Queensland and other states. He revisited New Zealand and then in 1893 returned to Australia where he played a number of centres, again including Queensland.

The whereabouts of Bentley over the next four or five years is unknown at this stage, however it is likely that he returned to the United Kingdom after a tour of South Africa. By 1898, however, he had returned to Australia, and for a while settled in the south-east area of Queensland. During this time he ran his Walter Bentley Dramatic Acting classes in Brisbane in addition to presenting theatrical seasons and a variety of events such as Mrs Joyce Manhatten's piano recital (Sept.) and Sunday lectures and pictorial presentations (such as Lourdes and its Miracles and The Land of the Maori). These last activities brought Bentley into conflict with several church groups, leading him to make a number of concerted public attacks on the Council of Churches who were demanding the abolishment of Sabbath entertainments. In October he also presented the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play and Hamlet, the latter containing members of his Dramatic Art Classes, one of whom was the young John Ralston, who played Osric (BC: 14 Oct. 1898, 2). Ralston would later become one of Australia's leading opera and musical comedy actor/singers. It has been recorded, too, that sometime around this period Bentley wrote a play, Captain Dreyfus, which George Rignold produced at the Criterion in Sydney. Of a non-theatrical nature during Bentley's stay in South-east Queensland was his unsuccessful attempt to run for parliament in the Stanthorpe seat of Carnarvon in the 1899 elections.

Bentley returned to the stage in 1899, and is known to have been touring through New Zealand in 1900, where he eventually joined forces with Douglas Ancelon to form the Ancelon-Bentley Dramatic Company. There is another gap in Bentley's life after this, although it seems likely that he and Ancelon continued their association for some period of time. He did return to the United Kingdom at some stage, however, as it is known that he appeared with the Osmund Tearle Company at Nottingham's Grand Theatre as Shylock in 1905. He also declined a starring engagement in South Africa for Leonard Rayne, due to prior commitments around this time (TT: Mar. 1915, 6), while it is further known that sometime during 1906 he appeared in A Victim of Villainy, a melodrama produced in London (TT: Jan. 1906, 9).

In 1909 Bentley quietly returned to Australia for a season in Adelaide, where he presented The Silver King. It has been reported that as he was about to leave Sydney he was approached by the young Stanley McKay, who induced him to present Hamlet at the Criterion upon his return some three weeks later. Although this was to be his first professional production, McKay put together a company in the short space of time he had, and rehearsed without the lead actor until three or four days prior to the opening. The enormously successful season (although only ten days long due to a previous booking at the theatre) was a particularly pleasing one for the tragedian, due mainly to the high praise he received. Upon the completion of the Criterion season, Bentley returned to Queensland under the production of Harry Clay, presenting a collection of works including Hamlet, David Garrick, and The Bells. A number of reports suggest that this tour was the first to include Shakespeare since he last came north some twelve years previously. [See Chapter Five and Appendix C for further details]

After the Clay tour Bentley settled himself and his family in Sydney and formed his own College of Elocution and Dramatic Art (initially located at 49 Phillip Street). Within a year or so he was presenting regular productions at St. James Hall in the city (as well as occasional visits to other centres such as Parramatta). These performances would include aside from Bentley and his students, the other principals of the college, these being Douglas Ancelon and a Miss Chapman. In 1913, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that Bentley's college was "the only establishment that has for four years given a performance every month" (16 Aug. 1913, 2). During the succeeding years Bentley continued to operate his college, as well as occasionally writing articles for several trade journals, primarily the Theatre and later Green Room. The topics of these ranged from his views on the deficiencies of Australian picture acting, and how to correct them (TT: Nov. 1915, 39); "The Scot on the Stage" (TT: Feb. 1916, 33) and "What Shall We Do with Our Girls" (GR: Feb. 1922, n. pag.); in addition to numerous reflections on his own and others' careers.

In 1910 he and George Titheridge set up the Actors' Association of Australia, with Bentley as Secretary and Titheridge as President. Interestingly, the Theatre reported (somewhat sarcastically) in 1914 that most of those present at the elections for office bearers of the Australian Actors' Association that year were non-Australians. Those present included Daisy Jerome, George Titheridge, elected president, and Walter Bentley elected Secretary (Mar. 1914, 26). Bentley continued in the position of Secretary until 1916, when he became President after the death of Titheridge. After being voted into office, however, he then relinquished the position in favour of Julius Knight when the position of Secretary (which he had held for a number of years) could not be satisfactorily filled. He was also a long time member and office bearer of the NSW Shakespearian Society, at one stage becoming that society's President. In addition to these positions, Bentley is known to have unsuccessfully contested the seat of Drummoyne for the NSW Legislative Assembly in a 1916 bi-election. It has been recorded, too, that around this time he suffered a breakdown of some kind, due in part to his heavy commitments to the war effort and his advancing years - he was by now in his late sixties.

In 1917, Bentley arranged for his college to combine with the Austral College of Music, at which point in time it became known as the Sydney Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. As a result he moved his studios to the Repertory Theatre, Grosvenor Street in the city. In 1918, he received much publicity when he was sued by a lady who claimed that he had not returned an autograph album which she had lent him. The woman lost the case but not the album, which strangely enough turned up when the veteran actor found it shortly after the case was heard (GR: June 1918, n. pag.).

During the last years of his life, Bentley continued to present his Walter Bentley Players at St. James's Hall, giving lectures for a wide variety of different associations, including the Shakespearian Society, and overseeing the operation of his college which by the end of the second decade was providing training for Elocution, Oratory, Dramatic Art, Picture Acting, Musical Monologues, Elocution of Song, Scenario Writing for Private Plays, Public Speaking and the curing of Stuttering and Stammering (GR: Apr. 1918, n. pag.).

On the 19th of September 1927, and after a long period of ill health, Bentley put a gun to his head and committed suicide. He was 79 years of age. His last words to his wife, as she left to run an errand, were "I feel brighter" (JI: 29 Sept. 1927, 4). Just It records that he was an "actor of the first rank, and in private a delightful companion." The same view seems to have been held throughout his life, despite some frequent indications as to his somewhat serious nature and lack of humour. As a popular and well-known figure in theatrical and social circles he was often lampooned by comics and other actors, including Harry Clay, whose impersonation of him could apparently bring the house down. Some examples of this treatment of him include a poem by Codger and published in Green Room in 1918, one line being: "While the great Walter Bentley could not see the joke when they made a stage-camel of him" (8).

As an actor Bentley was held in high esteem, although several critics saw his Scottish accent as the main handicap to him being regarded as one of the great Shakespearian actors of the period. Further to this John Plummer has suggested that as Bentley was never given the opportunity to create a character in a new play (due he said to the dearth of dramatic authors of the higher class) he had also suffered unfairly (TT: Dec. 1909, 10). In a sense, however, it was his decision to take quality theatre, and Shakespearian at that, to the distant areas of Australasia (many places having had little exposure to such entertainment) and not keeping himself wholly to the metropolitan theatres, that became one of his great achievements. In addition his role as a teacher and activist in the theatre industry, at a time when there were few locally born actors of equal experience, can be seen as part of his legacy to the country.

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- Mr Walter Bentley made his first appearance at the Garrick Theatre as Hamlet, on Saturday. The new impersonation is characterised by the clearness and simplicity of the conception in which the reflective nature of the Prince, who loses himself in

labyrinthian thoughts is kept in the background. Thus the play, which has been called a tragedy of thought, becomes a tragedy of action.... [he] is thoroughly at home in the character, and the audience are made to feel it (SMH: 6 June 1892, 7).

- Mr Bentley's representation is decidedly superior to nine tenths of the modern Hamlets, and it would be an infinitely more acceptable performance if certain peculiarities in the way of clothing English words with a Scotch pronunciation could be got rid of (A: 19 Sept. 1892, 6).
- During the past quarter century the Sydney public has seen a good many editions of Bailie Nicol Jarvie [Rob Roy] and Mr Bentley's interpretation of the character occupies a prominent position among them in regard to merit. It was a consistently good performance, and the audience was in a constant simmer of amusement whenever the Glasgow magistrate was on stage (AV: Sept. 1893, 6).
- Walter Bentley as Hamlet:- To be or not to be, that is the question (damn that limelight), whether it is nobler in the mind (keep quiet behind, you crimson fools) to suffer the slings and outrageous fortune (more limelight, you crimson idiot), etc (TT: Apr. 1907, n. pag.).
- In noting that these are "Shakespeare famine days," the Theatre records that "Walter Bentley as Richard III [is] the first since American Geo. C. Milne almost twenty years previously" (TT: Sept. 1909, 21).
- Shakespearian drama has had little attention in Brisbane since Mr Bentley appeared here some ten or twelve years ago. A production of a tragedy or a comedy at rare intervals has been all that we have had, not because a more generous measure of production would not have been gladly supported, but because actors and actresses capable of work in these high domains of literary and dramatic art have been few and far between. The warmth and spontaneity of the reception accorded to Mr Bentley... evidenced both the pleasure felt in meeting an old friend, and the appreciation of opportunity afforded of seeing once more an immortal play (BC: 6 Sept. 1909, 6).
- He is a man possessing ability amounting almost to genius, and to those who were familiar only with his acting in such parts as Hamlet or Wilfred Denver, his performances in David Garrick or Crammond Brig came as a surprise. He is one of the most capable and conscientious actors of the day, yet strangely enough, he had never had an opportunity of creating a character in a new play, a result, apparently, of a dearth of dramatic authors of the higher class (John Plummer, ctd. TT: Dec. 1909, 10).
- Walter Bentley's father, at one time a clergyman in New Zealand, did not at all relish the idea of his son taking to the stage. Returning home one night, disappointed in one of his early efforts to do something in this direction, Mr Bentley found his father and half-a-dozen clergymen sitting round the fire. The father growlingly observed that he saw Walter had come back from Hades, and asked him what he had seen there. Mr Bentley's reply was, "Just what I see here. You couldn't get near the fire for clergymen." It is Arthur A.D. Bayldon, the writer of the world-famed Marlow sonnet, that tells this yarn. But who is it that knows Walter - dour by nature, and without a gleam of humour, let alone wit - will believe that he was ever capable of such an utterance? (TT: Mar. 1911, 33).
- Walter Bentley is to be congratulated upon the manner he kept in the background of the Ellen Terry tribute. His name only appeared in the programme seven times and a flashlight of the performers showed him in the centre of the stage, arm in arm with Miss Terry (TT: Aug. 1914, 33).
- Walter Bentley's sad end came as a great shock to the public. He was one of the finest Silver Kings ever seen on the local boards.... Latterly his health broke down and he suffered a great deal of pain. He was an actor of the first rank, and in private a delightful companion (JI: 29 Sept. 1927, 4).
- Playgoers in many parts of the British Empire will learn with regret of the death of Walter Bentley, and more especially in Australia and New Zealand, parts of the world with which the Shakespearian actor's connection dates back half a century... Those who remember him in 1891 may pleasurably recollect him at the height of his career.... A widely read man, well-versed, particularly in Shakespearian lore, an able speaker and organiser, a successful lecturer and teacher, and a genial and charitable friend. Mr Bentley filled an important place in the community for many years (SMH: 20 Sept. 1927, 12).

BERT HOWARD

Picture show, vaudeville and boxing manager. Born in 1879, The Rocks, Sydney. Nicknamed both "The Droll" and "The Lord Mayor of Poverty Point," Bert Howard worked for Harry Rickards, Harry Clay and J.C. Bain in his early theatrical career. Around 1910 he began running picture shows in the Sydney suburbs. He was also actively involved in the boxing industry as the manager of several established fighters. He briefly formed his own vaudeville and picture circuit around 1915 before joining forces with Frank Graham (ca.1914-16) and later with Ike Beck (1917). Howard returned to his own solo operations in 1918 while also running a booking agency. Howard is known to have had an entrepreneurial association with James H. White in the late 1920s, and to have continued to run vaudeville, pantomime and pictures in Sydney and NSW into the early 1930s.

One of Sydney's leading B circuit vaudeville managers and entrepreneurs - a group headed by Harry Clay and consisting of others such as Jacky Landow, Frank Reis and Harry Sadler, Bert Howard started his working life as a newsboy at Circular Quay. He later became interested in the fight game, first as a lightweight boxer and later as a manager. One of his earliest managerial successes was in helping Tommy Dillon win at a tournament at Waterloo. As a young man Howard was taken under the wing of Harry Rickards, initially selling song books at the Tivoli Theatre, and later acting as Rickards' office-boy and valet. After twelve years he stepped into the suburban vaudeville game, finding employment with Harry Clay's newly formed company for some five years, a period which also included spending at least one nine month period on tour throughout Queensland (and most likely some other states) with Clay. He later undertook similar employment with J.C. Bain for a further five years or so. Between around 1910 and 1916 Howard worked the suburbs of Sydney as a picture operator with Humbert Pugliese (of the Alhambra), in addition to his involvement in the boxing game. He has claimed that they were the first to introduce moving pictures to many of Sydney's suburbs. During that time Howard is also known to have been employed for some two years as a stage manager for the Fullers, and as a manager for both Dr Richard Rowe (magician and spiritualist) and Norwood (American Hypnotist). Taking the advice of Clay's manager Wally Edwards, Howard originated the Sunday night concerts at the old Gaiety Theatre, and continued his running of vaudeville and pictures around a small circuit in Sydney. In 1914 he and Frank Graham were jointly screening pictures shows and vaudeville around Sydney in a partnership which apparently lasted a year or so.

By 1917 Howard had joined forces with Ike Beck, running vaudeville and pictures in Redfern, Mascot, Leichhardt, Burwood and Rozelle. The partnership did not last long, however, due, one might suggest to the very nature and past experiences of each other. After parting ways with Beck, Howard opened up his own booking agency, and is renowned for having conducted his business from a doorway at Sydney's Poverty Point, often leaving messages in chalk on the footpath. In 1918 he expanded his operations, servicing suburbs such as Crows Nest, Leichhardt, Auburn, Granville and Hornsby, in addition to several country touring circuits. In 1919, after patching up their differences, Howard engaged Ike Beck for his circuit as a vaudeville performer during Beck's hiatus from his own managerial activities. Howard's circuit had also by this time expanded into the Blue Mountains area. In 1920 his Sydney circuit was Leichhardt, Arncliffe, Lidcombe, Parramatta, and Granville.

Howard continued as a vaudeville and picture show entrepreneur right up until at least the early 1930s, his circuit over the 1928 and 1929 period included, for instance Campsie, Manly, Burwood, Bankstown, Parramatta, Earlwood, Granville. Around this time, too, he toured a pantomime company through a number of regional centres including the Hunter circuit (ca. Jan. 1928). The productions included Beauty and the Beast, while the troupe consisted of Arthur Morley, Wal Rockley, Dan Thomas and Percy King among others. According to reports the tour was receiving much success until Howard was struck down with a seriously debilitating illness which required four operations and knocked both him and the tour out of action. While laid up his company was run by James H. White, Harry Clay's ex-Theatrical Agency manager, and a small-time entrepreneur in his own right. Upon recovering his health, Howard returned to his suburban circuit, continuing his career of thirty or so years in Sydney theatrical management.

In 1929 Howard claimed to have been the first manager to introduce revusicals to the suburbs, suggesting that if anyone wanted to argue "let's see if they can remember a company earlier than Arthur Morley's, On the Sands with Amy Rochelle, Jim Caldwell, the Phillip Sisters, the Dudleys, Morley and Bates, Will Rollow and Ted Stanley" (Howard 104).² He has also claimed to have given Nellie Kolle her first success, prior to the English male impersonator's metropolitan successes, although some doubt exists concerning this claim as Kolle's first six years in Australasia were almost certainly under contract to the Fullers.

As a fight manager, Howard gained some recognition for his involvement in the careers of Bob Whitelaw, Arthur Cripps, and Tommy Hanley, while also touring such fighters as Billy McColl, George Johns and heavyweight title contender Bill Squires. His involvement with vaudeville saw him employ a great number of Australian artists over the years, although in no way comparable to that of his fellow B circuit manager, Harry Clay. However, many of the leading artists Howard engaged were also leading performers for Clay's, Rickards and the Fullers managements, these artists including George Sorlie, Arthur Tauchert, Arthur Morley, Maurice Chenoweth, Lily Vockler Ted Tutty and Denis Carney to name just a few. He is also known to have engaged the likes of Clyde Cook, Nat Phillips and Broncho Wallace at various times during his career.

Referred to as the Lord Mayor of Poverty Point (Harry Clay having been the King), Howard was highly regarded for his generous charity work. As he himself noted: "While it makes an old showman like me mighty happy to hear the money clinking in the box-office, maybe I get more happiness out of hearing the chuckles when we give the Lidcombe Hospital a show, or the yells of the youngsters when we play the Boys' Farm at Mittagong..." (Howard 104).

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- Bert Howard, "The Droll," wishes it to be distinctly understood that he is still in the business, despite the many knockers who would keep him out if they could. At present Bert is running his own show, and also works in conjunction with Frank Graham (AV: 29 Oct. 1913, 6).
 - Long Bert Howard is also helping local acts get three regular meals and the usual bed nowanights. The King Droll is a battler who strikes adversity now and again, but he is some fighter, believe me (AV: Jan. 1914, n. pag.).

² Interestingly, this company sounds suspiciously like Harry Clay's No 1 Revue Company. At this point there is no explanation for such a similarity. Clay began presenting revues in 1916, at a time when each of those artists was known to have been in his regular employment.

- "The King of Drolls" appeared to be very disconsolate one day last week. On Wong Toy Sun asking the reason, the big fellow said:- "Here I am with a fine office, everything I want, and to think that I cannot 'bridge' it to Dr Richard Rowe right away. When he comes back the newness will be worn off" (AV: 16 May 1917, n. pag.)
- Success kills some people, but not so with Bert Howard, who despite the fact that he is now doing better than at any other period during the past ten years, has plenty of time for his less fortunate professional brethren. At the same time there are a few who still "knock" and the big fellow now and again has a little of this commodity directed against him. It would be better if some of these loafers took a leaf out of The Droll's book, and got a hustle on! Whilst they are asleep he is working for himself and the new firm. When not with them he is doing business for somebody else. Beck and Howard are now doing fine business, and the latter says that with Ike behind him he is not afraid of anybody in the show business (AV: 13 June 1917, n. pag.).
- It is not generally known that Bert Howard was at one time a picture showman, and many Sydney suburbs now possessing an elaborate theatre saw its first films screened by the Howardscope. The Droll specialised in Sunday evening screenings and he numbered among his audiences of the time many who are now prominent exhibitors. In addition to the pictorial offering, artists helped the show along, and the favourites included Clyde Cook, Nat Phillips, George Sorlie, Tom Armstrong, Bronco Wallace and George Clements, who was the real big noise with a lineup of illustrated songs. With such films as The Life and Death of Ned Kelly and The Life of Buffalo Bill, the show was always good for an extension of the season to three or four nights in all centres (E: 9 Jan. 1929, 49).
- I used to be a magnate in the days when the only two syllable word anyone in the picture business knew was "Fillum." We had the "Howardscope," Harry Harrison, Joe Dunn, Daddy Franklin, and me, with Humbert Pugliese as operator. It was one of the first movie outfits to go on tour, with the Clement Bros, Charles Rodgers, Olive (Baby) Carr, Doris Tindall, Jack West, Baby Josie Johnson and Scott and Wallace as added attractions. Just as well we had those added attractions, because half the time we had no picture show. Plop -flop- plop! And the machine was a bust (E: 11 Dec. 1929, 104).

STANLEY MCKAY

Actor/theatrical entrepreneur/pantomime and Shakespearian director/ travelling tent showman. Born in Tumut NSW, McKay became the founding director of the Sydney Muffs Amateur Dramatic in 1903. Apart from several years during the second world war, he toured pantomime and Shakespearian drama throughout many regional and city centres in Australia and New Zealand almost continuously from ca.1908 and up until at least the early 1930s, and quite often using tents. He occasionally toured or undertook engagements with his own company under the auspices of the Fullers and Harry Clay, as well as in association with Walter George, Birch-Carroll (Qld) and George Stephenson. McKay's first professional venture was the Walter Bentley Criterion Theatre season in 1909, and by 1911 had at least two companies on the road touring serious drama and pantomime. Several well-known artists spent considerable time with McKay over the years including Jim Gerald, Essie Jennings, Bruce Drysdale and Phyllis Faye. McKay is known to have toured virtually all the Australian States during his long career.

Considered one of the most enterprising actor/managers during the first three decades of the twentieth century by his Australian contemporaries, H. Stanley McKay was one of the first showmen in the 20th century to tour pantomime around Australia and New Zealand using tents as his theatre space. While the greater part of his life was spent in theatrical pursuits he initially started out working for the Bank of New South Wales, where he spent some nine years. Three years into this career he began devoting his spare time to the theatre, founding the Sydney Muffs in 1903. Their premiere production, Henry Hamilton's Harvest, was presented in July of that year. The Sydney Muffs were to become a highly popular and critically acclaimed amateur theatrical company, not only for their generally excellent productions, but also for their considerable charity work. The success of this company was seen by a number of critics as a result of McKay's enthusiastic and professional attitude. Their repertoire is known to have included drama, farce, comedy-drama, and vaudeville. While still an amateur he also instigated the first Australian Shakespearian Festival at the Palace Theatre. One of McKay's last productions as an amateur was during Easter week 1909 when he presented Uncle Tom's Cabin at Clay's Standard Theatre, the company including the young Fred Stephenson as Uncle Tom.

In August of 1909, having left the bank, he presented his first professional production³ the Walter Bentley Hamlet season at the Criterion Theatre (Sydney). Highly acclaimed by the critics and with record attendances, the production belied the two and a half weeks rehearsal time it was able to be allocated (along with the fact that Bentley was only available for the final three or four days of the rehearsal period). Sometime after this McKay formed his own Shakespearian and Comedy Company. In late 1910, he began presenting pantomime shows around NSW and in Sydney, resulting in the 1911 Bo-Peep tour of Queensland under the auspices of Harry Clay, and which was advertised as the largest ever toured in the Commonwealth. By all accounts much of the public's initial

³ McKay uses the term regular to differentiate professional from amateur. In a 1916 review of his career prior to enlisting in the Army, McKay has said of the term: "I use it [regular] instead of professional. This latter is the general term used to distinguish the man or woman who takes up theatrical work as a hobby, generally called amateur from the individual who makes it his, or her, means of livelihood. But I have seen so many of the so-called amateurs who have been so much superior to the so-called professionals that I prefer the word regular" (TT: Sept. 1916, 41).

interest lay in the size of the mammoth mining tent the company used, it seating some 2,000 people and taking several days to erect, while the critical responses to the shows themselves were overwhelmingly enthusiastic. [See *Appendix C for further details*] McKay claims in 1916 that he "chose pantomime for preference, as no touring company other than the late John Sheridan's (who played only a few towns), had exploited 'panto' through Inland [sic] Australia" (TT: Sept. 1916, 42). While the Bo-Peep tour utilised rail and steamer for its transportation, McKay's other tours around this period involved a variety of methods, including stage coach, bullock wagons, cars, trucks and even a sulky. From 1912 and up until around 1916 he operated two touring companies at one time - one offering pantomime and the other serious drama, more often than not presenting in Shakespeare. The companies toured all the Australian states, with the dramatic company also being known to have operated under a tent for its productions.

During the 1914-15 period McKay dropped the dramatic company tours in favour of two pantomime companies, no doubt forced into this by the greater financial returns offered through presenting popular theatre. The companies toured for a while on the Fullers circuit, the itineraries including Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, and Fremantle, along with NSW and Queensland regions. Ross B. Simpson, the manager in charge of the No 2 company, and who also handled the book work for McKay, estimated that the No 1 company alone travelled some 27,000 miles during the 12 month period to July 31, 1915. In December 1915 McKay expanded his operations when he undertook his first overseas venture, a tour through the New Zealand dominions. Between 1914 and 1916 his pantomime company included Jim Gerald and Essie Jennings. In mid 1916, however, McKay, as with fellow thespian Gerald, volunteered for war service, thus putting his theatrical operations on hold.

While details of McKay's career between the end of the war and 1924 are at this stage unclear, it is believed that he continued touring his Pantomime and Dramatic companies as previously. Between 1924 and 1929 his tours are known to have included at least all three eastern states as well as New Zealand, with the organisation, by now known as Stanley McKay's Enterprises, and scoring successful seasons in 1928-29 with Frank Neil's grand operas Up in Mabel's Room and Getting Gertie's Garter. During his long career, McKay utilised the services of a number of well-known actors and vaudevillians, including John Cosgrove, Jim Gerald and Essie Jennings, Joe Rox, Nellie Ferguson, Elsie Prince, Bruce Drysdale and Phyllis Faye, Will Raynor, the Coleman Sisters, and Billy and Ivy Cass. McKay's entrepreneurial efforts were frequently acknowledged by many within the industry, including the leading trade journals. He was often praised for his strong contributions as an actor during his early years, and for the skill with which he established the often critically acclaimed Sydney Muffs productions. His apparent disposition, professionalism and enthusiasm also reportedly earned him the respect and admiration of his fellow thespians, helping to create an theatrical enterprise which lasted some twenty years or more.

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- The Sydney Muffs have not evinced their usual activity of late, their efforts being restricted to suburban performances. Rumour however speaks of their reappearance at the Criterion Theatre on Dec. 21st, but the name of the piece selected has not been made known. Stanley McKay is still the moving spirit in all the club's undertakings, which have lately assumed a Shakespearian bent with much success (TT: Nov. 1905, 7).
 - Since the initial production by "The Sydney Muffs" at the Criterion Theatre in July, 1903, that clever band of amateurs has been particularly active in the cause of charity - city and suburban charities having benefited to the extent of nearly £400 by the club's exertions... Much of the success of "The Muffs" is due to the energy displayed by their general manager, Mr Stanley McKay (TT: June 1906, 13).
 - The Sydney Muffs revived The Merchant of Venice on a very complete scale at the Royal Standard Theatre, on evenings of 11th, 12th and 13th November. ... Mr Stanley McKay's Shylock is well and favourably known to play-goers. He realised more than ever the implacability, fierce hatred, and subtle cunning of the old Jew, and his acting in the Trial scene was very fine (TT: Dec. 1908, 19).
 - By courtesy of Mr Bland Holt, who generously lent the Theatre Royal The Sydney Muffs, who are ever ready to lend a hand for charity's sake, staged Niobe and A Martyr to Principle in aid of St. Martha's Industrial Home, Leichhardt. The theatre was crowded. Niobe, which followed the original playlet A Martyr to Principle, was thoroughly appreciated by the audience, but the interest really centred in the curtain-raiser, which was written by Sumner-Locke and Stanley McKay, the well-known Director of "The Sydney Muffs" (TT: Sept 1909, 19).
 - Mr McKay's manifold other theatrical ventures include the organisation of the Shakespearian and Comedy Co. with which he just recently returned to Sydney after making the third of a most successful series of tours of the Northern Rivers..... So costly and exhilarating an entertainment is that now promised by Mr McKay [the Bo-Peep tour] that he should meet with crowded houses, particularly in the country, where pantomime on the scale on which he is presenting it is really being seen for the very first time (TT: Nov. 1910, 10).
 - Stanley McKay's Pantomime, Mother Goose, is showing at the Lyric Theatre, on the Esplanade, St Kilda [Melb], and a tidy little combination it is, too, and also vaudeville Australian artists are here getting a decent chance to show what they can really do, and are miles ahead of some of the imported article, which is constantly being pushed into Australia for a Christmas pantomime, heralded by a lot of newspaper junket and interviews, and if the truth is really known they come out of a small time pantomime in

the "smalls" of England. Essie Jennings, as principal boy is great, her beautiful figure making the society crowd look some, and her singing and acting being a real knock-out to this scribe...Jimmy Gerald (alias Fitzgerald) is a fair dame, and scores solid throughout, although some of his songs want nailing down his box. On the whole, McKay deserves every success for getting such good vaudeville talent together (AV: 18 Nov. 1914, n. pag.).

- Mr McKay is a man of untiring energy. To his many friends it was ever a matter of wonder how he contrived to keep going at the pace he worked. Yet never in the course of his association with the stage has he been incapacitated for a day (TT: Sept. 1916, 41).
- Stan McKay's Pantomime Coy has been meeting with big success on their present tour of the NSW towns... the entire company return to Sydney for a week's spell, then out again on tour (E: 20 May 1925, n. pag.).
- For the first six months of the year, during the New Zealand tour, the repertoire was devoted solely to pantomime, and since July - on the company's return to Australia - Mr McKay arranged with Mr Walter George to present his Operatic Revues, which were so very successful for some years at Fullers city theatres.... During the tour of the Dominion.... Mr McKay had the honour of being the first manager to place the House Full sign at the matinee [in New Plymouth] - this happy necessity being repeated at the night performance.... When en route from Tauranga - where the New Zealand tour ended ... the company had the unpleasant experience of being shipwrecked on Slipper Reef (E: 15 Dec. 1926, 126).

HARRY SADLER

Comic/singer/manager/vaudeville entrepreneur. Born ca.1899, brother of Bill Sadler, and married to Nellie Searle, a well-known soubrette. In 1912 the Northern Miner said of the diminutive comic/manager, he's "a most melancholy looking comedian" (7 May 1912, 4). Sadler worked for Fullers, Harry Rickards and Harry Clay during his career, but it is chiefly in his own right as a vaudeville entrepreneur that he became known around Australia. His early life and career are unknown as yet with the earliest record found to date being in 1902, when he secured an engagement with John Fuller Jnr as a corner-man for a New Zealand tour. This in turn led to his association in 1907 with Harry Rickards at the Tivoli (Syd). He is also believed to have first worked for Harry Clay around this period, later managing theatres in Tasmania, Perth, and Victoria, with his most renowned operations being the Princess and Gaiety Theatres in Sydney. Sadler became the most talked about man in vaudeville in 1918 when he was the centre of a lawsuit by one of his female artists, the resulting scandal and his topsy-turvy financial and management career being considered as some of the reasons behind his suicide in 1919.

Harry Sadler is another of the more interesting Australian vaudeville personalities. Energetic and feisty, he was a hustler and a spieler in every sense. The pocket-sized comic and endman perhaps came closer than any other circuit vaudeville manager to matching the heights of Harry Clay's record of achievement as a vaudeville man - making his name at both the Princess and Gaiety theatres, in addition to his various circuits throughout Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. But unlike Clay, who'd learnt to curb his temperament and channel it constructively, Sadler found himself riding the waves of success and despair throughout his career - a career cut short by his suicide in the wake of financial problems and a highly publicised law-suit and scandal. Sadler's worst enemy, it would seem, was himself.

While much of his early life and career is still to be uncovered, it is known that he secured an engagement to tour New Zealand for the Fullers after John Fuller Jnr saw him performing with Jim Bell's company at King's Theatre, Newcastle in 1902. Sadler himself recalls the tour as getting off to a fiery start when he knocked out Ted Sylvani, the Fullers' Stage Manager at the Dunedin theatre, after the latter apparently insulted him. After the same thing happened again at Christchurch, with a different stage manager, an angry Walter Fuller wrote to his brothers, who apparently decided to teach their young end-man a lesson, hiring one Tommy McGregor to play a role in the farce usually played by Ben Fuller. Sadler recalls:

When he entered I asked (being a waiter), "What's for you?" He said, "I want some steak, and I want it blood-raw" - then he banged me on the temple, and knocked me down. I was a bit silly for a second; but got up; and after asking the same question he hit me again, this time, a beaut in the pit of the stomach, and down I went. I was almost out. The audience were thoroughly enjoying it. So was Ben Fuller... who was laughing fit to kill himself. Then I tumbled to the joke. I got up, took off my apron and cap... determined if to see if I couldn't give him some. We then got to it. In three minutes we were both "blood-raw." Anyhow I fixed my man. I knocked him. The moment I did so down came the curtain. As my opponent lay there... the other members of the company crowded round, exclaiming, "Do you know who you have knocked? Why that's Tommy McGregor - the champion of New Zealand." Ben came on the stage, and how did he laugh (TT: June 1915, 49).

Sadler goes on to recall that he ended up teaching Ben Fuller the finer points of boxing, and as a pupil he records, "Ben [on a number of occasions] did me proud." After finishing up with the Fullers some five or so months later, it is believed that he spent a brief time on Harry Clay's Sydney circuit (during the non-Queensland tour part of the year, and possibly around the same period as George Sorlie). Sadler was later offered an engagement with Harry Rickards, having been given a letter of introduction from Ben Fuller. He was on the Rickards circuit for seven years - a good deal of that time in association with Major Bosco. Finishing up with

Rickards, he is believed to have spent some more time on Clay's circuit before accepting another engagement with the Fullers after they took over the Brennan circuit. It has been reported that he stayed there for some six months before being transferred to Melbourne as a manager for the firm.

Between the end of his Fullers' engagement and the opening of his Tasmanian and Victorian operations around 1913/14, Sadler re-established his connection with Harry Clay, performing both on his Sydney circuit and on the first half of Clay's 1912 Queensland tour. The Theatre in its December 1912 issue records that:

Mr Harry Sadler has often worked with Mr Harry Clay. One of the songs he used to sing was, "Studying the Doctor's Orders." In this get-up he had a swag on his back. Mr Clay says that sometimes when Mr Sadler was singing this he used to shout to him from behind the scenes: - "If I had my way, I'd strap that swag to your back, and make you carry it to Melbourne" (TT: Dec. 1912, 33).

By early 1914 the Sadler and Beveridge partnership had begun an enterprise at Hobart's Theatre Royal, backed by Ben Fuller. In July they announced their plan to open in Launceston, which Australian Variety suggested was risky as "the city on the banks of the Tamar is the nemesis of vaudeville! J.C. Bain and Mareno Lucas had a bad experience there" (1 July 1914, 12). In August the pair were to open at Her Majesty's Theatre Ballarat (Vic), too, but had to postpone due to the advent of the war. By October the pair had begun introducing quick change dramas at the Hobart venue, and later in December they finally got the Ballarat operation under way, with Sadler claiming he intended to settle in the city. The following year he had his various Tasmanian and Victorian enterprises in full swing, including the lease of the Barclay Theatre in Footscray from March. In September, Sadler announced that he had "made arrangements with Mr S. Spurling, General Manager of the New National Theatre, Launceston, to take all acts and turns after they have played Hobart, and I have also made exceptional arrangements with Mr Ben J. Fuller for a continuous supply of acts for both centres" (AV: 22 Sept. 1915, n. pag.). By late September, however, despite "some success" he had apparently divested himself of his interests in the south and returned to performing once again.

Harry Sadler's return engagement as a performer was at the Princess Theatre, then owned by the Fullers, and by May 1916 he and Jack "Porky" Kearns had taken over the running of the popular venue for them, a venture which the Theatre reports as having been quite a success by the end of the year (Dec. 1916, 52). While his attention was primarily directed towards the Princess operations, Sadler nonetheless continued to put on seasons in some of his old stamping grounds, including Hobart around January/February. It seems that Sadler and Kearns eventually finished their run at the Princess some twelve months later (around May 1917), with Sadler continuing his association with Tasmania, playing at the Temperance Hall, Hobart and in other centres. Australian Variety notes in regard to his Launceston season, "Harry Sadler opens ... this week, and this will be about the strength of its run. One good night a week is about all that burg can stand. Sadler is on the bill, and with him are the Farrows, Shipp and Gaffney, Ward Lear, Maudie Stewart and others" (23 May 1917, 7). By the end of the month, he had indeed closed down his Launceston operations. He also closed down his Hobart venture, a decision which apparently created something of a furor amongst his artists.

In late November 1917, Sadler had once again taken over the Princess, with critics noting that it was Sadler's experience and innate understanding of what the audiences wanted that accounted for his success there. Australian Variety, however, reported that "during the past several years, Sadler has had a somewhat pyrotechnic career. This time he is in the game for keeps and the first whisperer who comes along with a good thing [horse racing tip] is to be thrown to a dressing-room of live serios" (AV: 23 Nov. 1917, n. pag.). 1918 began auspiciously enough Sadler, being able to attract some quality performers like George Sorlie, Arthur Morley, Phyllis Faye, Arthur Elliott and Harry Little. He also sent another troupe to Tasmania during January. During February he announced to the public through Australian Variety that he intended to expand his circuit, opening at the Melrose Theatre (Perth), a venue which "has been closed to vaudeville for some time" noted the magazine, and which further suggested that "it now remains to be seen whether Sadler and his hustling methods can keep it open permanently" (22 Feb. 1918, 3). During the same month Sadler claimed it cost him over £200 weekly to run the Princess. One of Sadler's major successes during the period was the Baby Dolls, a group of singers, dancers and physical culturists led by Phyllis Faye. However, his relationship with Faye was shortly to bring him into the West Australian court over an incident which occurred during the Perth season.

Sadler took with him to Perth several top-line artists including his old mate Porky Kearns, Arthur Morley (producer), Harry Little and Faye and the Baby Dolls. Initial reports suggest that the venture, which began around April was a successful one, and by June he was opening in a number of other centres including Fremantle and Kalgoorlie (July). During this time his personal situation was far from satisfactory, with Australian Variety recording that "a big law case comes off late this month, and the evidence will make even the ears of corn men open up wide. Artists throughout Australia will feel interested in the revelations, according to some of the know-alls" (19 July 1918, n. pag.) In early August the same magazine also reported that the case is "chockfull of undesirable evidence and spicy allegations" (2 Aug. 1918, 3).

By August 1918 "the most discussed man in Australian vaudeville" was back in Sydney having lost the case brought against him by Faye. The libel case centred around Sadler's allegation that Faye (whose husband Bruce Drysdale was on active duty in the war) and Arthur Morley were having an affair. Morley's wife Elsie Bates was in Perth with her husband at the time, but Sadler had indicated to several people that the pair were "carrying on," after Morley was seen by Jack Kearns coming out of Ms Faye's adjoining room. During cross examination Faye said that she had met Sadler shortly after she made her debut at Wallsend (NSW) in 1908 [aged 14], and that he had frequently since then made improper overtures to her. She added that she had defeated him in one instance by struggling with him. Sadler denied the allegations and produced witnesses to verify the fact that Morley was seen in

Faye's bed. In addition he claimed that well-known Perth bookmaker, Percy Dennis, with whom he had had a falling out, and who subsequently engaged Morley and Faye for his own shows after the allegation, was party to inflaming the situation in revenge. Included in the scandal, too, was Jack Kearns, who the prosecution claimed was a "drunken scoundrel" (TT: Sept. 1918, 30). The case was eventually found in favour of Faye, who was awarded £25, although the expenses incurred by Sadler for legal costs are believed to have been quite high.

Having returned to Sydney, Sadler began to arrange to takeover the lease of the old Emu Theatre in Oxford Street, near Hyde Park, a venture backed by bookmaker Andy Kerr, who was to take on the role of Direction. Sadler and Kerr began operating vaudeville out of the theatre, renamed the Gaiety, on the 9th of December 1918, with the opening company including Ike Beck, James Craydon (also stage manager), Louie Duggan, Carlton and Sutton, Thompson and Montez, Daisy Harcourt and Sadler himself. The Gaiety quickly took a hold on the city and Eastern Suburbs audiences, "doing remarkably good business" according to the Theatre (Jan. 1919, 25). However, it seems that despite the success of the venture, the psychological depression that would eventually cause Sadler to take his life later in 1919 began to take a firm grip on the comic/manager during the early part of the year. While little is known of Sadler's personal life during this period it would seem that his ability to manage the business side of the Gaiety was being left more and more to Kerr, along with Harry Clay who is believed to have been supplying many of the acts in an unofficial capacity (through his agency) in contrast to the way Sadler previously engaged his artists.

On July 23rd 1919, about a month after his brother Victor died in Queensland of pneumonia, Harry Sadler committed suicide by jumping to his death from a railway bridge at Leichhardt. Sydney's Evening News records that:

Harry Sadler, formerly manager of the Gaiety Theatre in Oxford Street, and well-known in theatrical circles, met his death in a sensational manner at Leichhardt this morning. Soon after 10 o'clock a man and a woman, who were standing on the bridge which crosses the Glebe Island- Homebush railway in Norton Street, saw a man jump on to the parapet of the bridge. He looked towards them for a moment and said, "Goodbye! You'll find my body below." Then he dived head first to the railway below (qtd. TT: Aug. 1919, n. pag.).

Sadler left a touching note to Martin Brennan, editor of Australian Variety, in which, even during his final hours he still gave thought to his long-time mate Jack Kearns. The note read:

Dear Martin,

I have decided to end it all today. I die knowing I did absolutely all I could for the profession. Through your paper give my kindest thoughts to Ben and John Fuller they are kings! Ta ta old pal; good luck!

Harry Sadler

P.S. - Ain't a man stiff. Cheer-oh Porky!

Australian Variety wrote of Sadler shortly after his death:

The unfortunate victim of his own hand was one of the best-known men in Australian vaudeville. His was a meteoric career, both as regards performer and manager. He had played the Fuller time on many occasions, and with very great success. As a manager, also, he was identified with several shows, all of which, strange to say, came to a somewhat premature end - sometimes from mismanagement, more often from sheer bad luck. Poor Sadler was a happy-go-lucky fellow, generous to a fault, and if ever he had an enemy it was probably himself.

Years later, Roy Rene wrote of Sadler in his memoirs, "those two men, Porky Kearns and Harry Sadler, were great performers in their day, and they knew show business backwards and they knew what the audience wanted" (61-22). Harry Sadler was forty years of age when he died, and is buried at Rookwood Cemetery. Surviving brothers Sid and Will were the chief mourners.

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- Harry Sadler's turn at the Tivoli is a roar from the start... He out-Tiches Little Tich, which is tall talk (TT: June 1907, n. pag).
 - Thus the ever energetic Harry Sadler, writing from the Theatre Royal, Hobart: Australian Variety is in great demand here, and you will find a good scope for it in Tasmania now that vaudeville has come, I hope to stay.... I have made arrangements with Mr S. Spurling general manager of the New national Theatre, Launceston, to take all acts and turns after they have played Hobart, and I have also made exceptional arrangements with Mr Ben J. Fuller for a continuous supply of acts for both centres... I will do all I can to push Variety along, and have already arranged for its sale in my theatres" (AV: 22 Sept. 1915, n. pag.).
 - Harry Sadler, in his elegant dress suit, makes an imposing figure in front of the Princess Theatre every evening. And how the comedian-manager works to get 'em in, and how he succeeds, is told in the fine box-office returns (AV: 31 May 1916, n. pag.).
 - When Sadler and Beveridge were running vaudeville in Hobart, Ted Stanley (doyen of theatrical managers in the tight little island), [would] put up some great jokes on them. Harry always dressed like a parson, and Ted's favourite joke was to get someone to hand Harry a bible wrapped in neat parcel. Harry used to go stone mad when he opened it (AV: 22 Aug. 1917, 15).

- Harry Sadler to be a "Live One" - When the Princess Theatre re-opens to-morrow, it will have Harry Sadler at the helm, and this ubiquitous comedian-manager is going to give this well-known house the surprise of its life. He will run broad burlesque for the edification of patrons, and those latter are going to see a legs show hitherto unequalled. A very fine company of comedians has been secured, and the talent of the rest of the show is in keeping with the venture. Mr Sadler wishes it to be distinctly understood that he is taking the venture up entirely on his own responsibility, the only interest the Fuller firm has is the lease of the premises (AV: 23 Nov. 1917, n. pag.).
- "Wanted - Fifty, fine divine cute beauty girls for Harry Sadler's great new show, The Yankee Doodle Girls" - so ran the advertisement in a recent daily paper..... And there was some rush. Honoured more in the breach than the observance, girls, women and "ladies" of all shapes and sizes, answered the call. During the past three days [of auditions] the manager and his staff have had the time of their lives; but the ultimate results have been very satisfactory, and to-morrow evening will see some of the best forms ever seen on the Australian stage. The Yankee Doodle Girls will be a burlesque show of the real rip-tearing type. It will keep within the bounds of discretion by a reasonable margin, and may also be depended upon to produce an entertainment of breezy merriment (AV: 23 Nov. 1917, n. pag.).
- "How to be Quick at Figures" by Harry Sadler will be on the market shortly. Advance sales are enormous (AV: 23 Nov. 1917, n. pag.).
- Harry Sadler is a full blown "Stenographer," and can go some on the machine. His office is a buzz of business, and to see Harry at work, things must be looking up. Some class now, he can be seen only by appointment (AV: 30 Nov. 1917, n. pag.).
- Harry Sadler offered Ben J. Fuller six months rent of the Princess Theatre in advance last Monday. But the governing-director refused to take the money. Instead, he told Sadler that he really thought that the latter was on the way to make a big reputation for himself, and, the money would be available for improvements, and other matters. This is no "bull" - for Sadler has the backing to a very large amount (AV: 7 Dec. 1917, n. pag.).
- Back to the pay-box. So great was the rush at the Princess Theatre last Saturday evening that Harry Sadler had to go into the main pay-box and tear off the roll tickets for the seller. So busy was he - when a client came to pay him thirty shillings, that he did not have time to put his hand out for it (AV: 8 Feb. 1918, n. pag.).
- Harry Sadler back. - The most discussed man in Australian vaudeville at the present time arrived back from Perth last Friday..... Despite the fact that the case went against him, Harry still has the old smile up, and fully anticipates everything going right again, ere he returns westward (AV: 23 Aug. 1918, 3).
- Judge not, that ye not be judged. [Part of Sadler's death notice, published in Australian Variety (AV: 25 July 1919, 3).
- When climbing the ladder of success may you never meet a friend. [Harry Sadler] (TT: Nov. 1922, 6)



Ike Beck
(AV: 27 Aug. 1920, 11)



Walter Bentley as Hamlet
(TT: Aug. 1909, 13)



Bert Howard – the Lord Mayor of
Poverty Point
(E: 12 Dec. 1928, 136.)



Harry Sadler
(AV: 25 July 1919, 3.)



Stanley McKay as Shylock
(TT: June 1906, 14)

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEWS

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This appendix contains interviews with people who had either a direct association with Harry Clay and his vaudeville company, or who remember attending performances - primarily at the Coliseum Theatre in North Sydney.

The interview with Charles Norman is in fact the second of three interviews I conducted with him during the course of 1997. The first was one of an introductory nature rather than a specific interview - the object being to find out the extent of Mr Norman's association with Harry Clay's organisation, as his book When Vaudeville Was King, refers only briefly to his period on Clay time. I found out, however, that along with his extraordinary memory (he was at the time of these interviews some 93 years of age) Charles' recollections carried with them a deep fondness for this time in his life. It was a period when his considerable career in Australian theatre was just starting out, and thus the influence of Harry Clay's company at this time (1923-1925) becomes evident more so than Clay's actual role in it. In part, this can be seen as the result of both Harry Clay's diminished role in the company after his stroke in 1921, and the business demands placed upon him at that time. Furthermore, his management team had by now become well and truly established, being run to a large extent by Maurice Chenoweth, Jimmy Boyle, Bill Sadler, and Wally Edwards.

The third interview was again a type of exploratory session, aimed at finding out who Charles knew and remembered with regard to artists and management around the time of his engagement with Clay's. The object here was to collect a list of names of those who were significant to the company during the 1920s, and to later present a list of questions to Charles. Sadly, he suffered a stroke mid year, and although he recovered from the ordeal to a degree, we were not able to continue our discussions again. Much of the information from the third interview, which I have not felt necessary to include here has, however, been useful in so far as getting an idea to some of those people we talked about. The (naturally) subjective nature of Charles' memory on the details of these artists and in some cases his friends, will be I believe, of more relevance to later non-academic publications regarding Harry Clay and Australian vaudeville.

Charles Norman died in late 1997 and although we only ever met by way of the telephone, the conversations we had about his experiences and the vaudeville era in general will be ones that I personally will never forget. He being the only living link to Harry Clay that I was able to locate was of enormous importance to me also, and his generosity in giving me his time, despite the problems associated with his age and health, are most gratefully remembered.

The other interviews included in this appendix were carried out by various people associated with the Stanton Library in North Sydney as part of its Oral History Collection. This marvellous archive, which contains recorded interviews and in many instances transcripts of those sessions, provides historians and sociologists with a valuable source of primary materials for research into North Sydney of the past. My gratitude is acknowledged to the Stanton Library for permission to include the following extracts from various interviews within this thesis.

Dorothy Hosking, professionally known as Thea Rowe, apparently worked as a performer for Clay's sometime during the mid to late 1920s, at a time when few records of Clay's operations were being published, and hence her involvement with the company has not been verified through other primary sources. The remaining extracts are from people who either recall going to Clay's, or in the case of Benita Brebach, someone with some historical knowledge of Clay's in North Sydney.

CHARLES NORMAN

SECOND TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES NORMAN

23 MARCH 1997

9 AM EST (10 AM MELBOURNE)

- CD:** Hello Mr Norman, how have you been?
- CN:** Better now that summer is over.
- CD:** Yes I was thinking about you during that heat wave you had a while back. I think I mentioned it in the letter I sent.
- CN:** Yes, I received your letter. I've begun answering a few questions for you, and I'll drop it off this week sometime.
- CD:** All right.
- CN:** I've filled it in as much as I could. I don't know anything about 1911, when he [Harry] was starting and booming. My time with him was in the twenties - up to 1925.
- CD:** I mentioned that period in the letter, as it's the time period I've been researching at the moment, but mostly from the Queensland perspective, and I'm hoping to go to Sydney at the end of next month to look into aspects of Harry's Sydney operations. But as I mentioned, it's all the little bits of information that I personally would like to know, that I can also put into the thesis to add some colour to the facts. It's the kind of things you don't normally get in newspaper reports. So you've actually written the answers to that questionnaire down, have you?
- CN:** Yes, I've got the answers for you.
- CD:** Oh okay, I thought we could do it over the phone if that was easier.
- CN:** No that's all right. It's an impressionable time in my career, and I've got a good recall you see. There's a lot of things you don't forget. I did meet him. And I was very impressed with him. He was quite a gentleman. We first met in those early days when we [Norman and Arnold] first got to Sydney in 1923. He came outside the office and he stood there with Chic and I, and he talked to us about the business and what we could do, and how he expected a lot because he said we've had some very good people from Melbourne. So he said you've got a very good chance here. We'll give you a chance with George Wallace. We'll put you in his show, and away you'll go. He's now the top comedian here. And he gave us good advice.
- CD:** What was your impression of Clay?
- CN:** He appealed to us when we first met him as a kind person. We didn't see him much after that. He never came to the shows of course. He stayed in the office and ran it from there you know - with his managers. He left it mostly to them. Each theatre had its manager. Mr Chenoweth had the Gaiety for years and another man had the Princess for years. And someone else had Newtown. The managers were there, they stayed with them and the circuit operated around them like that. The talent used to come to him. He never had agents looking for talent. But those country tours, they were interesting, but we never did that. We stayed around Sydney for the years. About three years. We did go to Wollongong every month.
- CD:** You'd go to Wollongong?
- CN:** Oh yes. We'd go down there and play a couple of towns around there. And there was always a manager with the show, in charge of us. And if we paid local fares going to the suburbs, they were always reimbursed in our salary. That was very good. And the programs were the same. Very good. We'd rehearse, you see, for a couple of weeks before we'd start with a show. And off we'd go for about a month or so, finish it, and start another.
- CD:** Right, so you'd be doing the circuit - some city shows, and then the suburban circuit. You did mention last time we spoke, of a northern circuit - around the Hunter area - the mining towns.
- CN:** Yes, we did go to Newcastle. He had very good connections up there. We played the coal mining towns like Cessnock, Curri Curri, West Wallsend. And they were as tough as coal miners were. Marshall Crosby, who was George Wallace's straight man used to say, "If you think you're clever, come to Curri". And we had a time proving it, but we used to get by. Poor devils, I suppose they had the worst work in the world, you know....
- CD:** If they didn't like you they'd let you know.
- CN:** Oh no, they were just a bit dull, actually. There was no call for being smart or clever. You had to be pretty broad, and so forth. But we got our experience. It's where we had to learn the business, and that happened.
- CD:** I was just wondering about that, because I'd assume that you'd have to change your shows for that area - from the ones you been doing in the city - wouldn't you?
- CN:** Oh no fear. Just the same. Clay audiences were Clay audiences. They were exactly that. They knew the business. You had to please them. They knew a lot about it, and you couldn't kid them. Any act or acts that didn't have much talent - well they woke up to that pretty quickly. No, they wanted the best and they demanded the best let me tell you.
- CD:** Yes, that's something that's becoming increasingly clear in my research of the Queensland country tours, how he was very much building up a following of people. And they come back time and time again, year after year. And the managers seemed to be very important in so far as creating that relationship - just as much, if not more, than the acts.
- CN:** Yes, he started of course in N.S.W. and Queensland. Mind you in their days the bush was the only alternative to the city. And I think that's where that good old saying came from - a saying that you never hear today - "Sydney or the bush". And I bet that came from actors. Because they couldn't play around the city long you see. The populations were small, and whatever material they could get had to come from there. There were always shows in the bush. And of course all the

way up there, there were many tents shows. Many of them. I believe we even had tent shows in Victoria. It was a great outlet for Australian talent, for the theatre.

- CD:** Yes. I'm just noticing how much entertainment was travelling around in the early part of this century. I've been going through regional newspapers, and have begun taking note of travelling theatre companies and vaudeville shows as I spot them while looking for Clay's tours. It's surprising how many, even in Queensland, were around. There was a constant stream of entertainment.
- CN:** Yes, absolutely. They depended on them for entertainment. There was nothing else. No wireless or anything like that. So they did the personal appearance. Did you see that the Brisbane paper recently published a photograph of several people who had worked in tents shows in Queensland, something to do with the musical Summer Rain?
- CD:** Yes, I seem to recall that.
- CN:** It's a lovely picture of these dear old grey-haired people. It was big business in Queensland.
- CD:** Just on the matter of photographs, I'll have to get hold of your publisher and find out where they got that photo of Clay's Newtown Bridge Theatre.
- CN:** That came from a newspaper in Sydney.
- CD:** Do you personally have any memorabilia from your days with Clay's? Any programs or anything?
- CN:** Not a great deal, really. It's so long ago to save any printed stuff.
- CD:** I can understand that. But I suppose the shows wouldn't have utilised things like programs would they. I thought they'd probably use billboards or something at the entrance wouldn't they.
- CN:** Oh yes. They certainly used programs. The people in those times, you see, would demand them. They would put programs out, and put dodgers, with the name of the cast on them, to kids to put around the district in the letterboxes. That was a form of a program, and the kids would get a couple of tickets to the show. They did that a lot in those days – they all did that.
- CD:** Now that's something I wasn't aware of. I had heard of the word 'dodger' but I wasn't aware of its implications.
- CN:** That's a dear old word that's gone now - the dear old dodger. It was a little coloured printed program with all the names of the acts on it, and the kids would put them in the letter boxes. Oh yes they did that quite a lot in those days. It was a good form of publicity. Very easy. The kids would put them in all the letterboxes in the week the show was coming. So they knew all about it.
- CD:** When you went up to Newcastle, Cessnock and those places, how did you travel?
- CN:** By train. The same down to Wollongong.
- CD:** I had a feeling that that was going to be the case - it seems that train was Harry's favoured means of transport even in Queensland.
- CN:** Yes.
- CD:** Some companies would travel by their own means - cars or trucks, but...
- CN:** Oh yes, but it was always by train with us. The scenery, which we used to take, there'd always be carriers at the station, every station had its carriers. They'd soon run the things you had out to the theatre. That was no trouble. They'd take small trunks and things like that.
- CD:** So you didn't have to do all of your own lugging of gear and equipment?
- CN:** No. And Harry had a man with a truck in Sydney - Long Ted was his name. I forget his other name, he was known just as Long Ted. He finished up at one of the cinemas in Sydney - I did meet him - the Prince Edward I think, opposite the Australia. He was in charge of all their travelling there at that cinema for years. He had a good job. But he spent many years with Harry Clay, did Long Ted. A good man. Dependable.
- CD:** Yeah that's something I've noticed. People tended to stay with Harry. Some would stay for a while, others would leave and come back and work for him - like George Sorlie....
- CN:** Oh yes. Well it was good work. They paid well. There was always plenty of money around because the shows always did quite good business as you know.
- CD:** Do you remember how much you were paid back in those days?
- CN:** How much we used to get?
- CD:** Yes.
- CN:** We started on seven pounds a week each - that was good money for us - 14 pounds for the double. As we went on for a year or so we got a rise of a quid or so. And they used to look after you well. They weren't mean by any means. Whatever they thought the act was worth they paid. Morry [Maurice] Chenoweth he was a good man - he was one of Harry's managers as you know. He'd been a performer and took over the management of the Gaiety. Quite a gentleman - very well liked. People liked him.
- CD:** Yes. It would be interesting to find out about Harry's managers. I remember you mentioned last time - Jimmy Boyle. And I've just come across his name on the 1910 tour of Queensland. And I'm hoping to find some mention of the time he and Harry worked together. I assume during the early days of Harry Rickards management.
- CN:** Oh yes. Harry Clay came from Rickards - he was one of his stars. He sang. He had a very sweet tenor voice, a very good voice indeed. And he used to be starred by Harry Rickards.
- CD:** I'm hoping I'll come across something on him. That must have been during the 1890s.
- CN:** Yes exactly. And I'll tell you too, you'll find more publicity at the Mitchell Library in Sydney.
- CD:** Yes, that will be my first stop when I get down there.
- CN:** Well I've got a friend who is a relative of Ted Tutty, she's a solicitor who lives in Adelaide, and she and her sister are putting out a book on Ted Tutty.

CD: Oh you're joking. That's great. I'm coming across Ted's name quite often - back as far as 1909.

CN: Yes well we did see him as kids. I did catch him. He was quite a funny man. He had the most peculiar Aussie delivery. People used to mock it. Yes Ted Tutty, he was very well known and liked. He lasted for years.

CD: Yes, I know that he was working for Harry in 1909, and there was something written about him in the Toowoomba paper - welcoming back Ted Tutty "everybody's favourite". He'd do a lot of blackface.

CN: Oh exactly. He was even good in his old age, he often worked in one of the big night clubs in Sydney. He'd get into his old tuxedo - they remembered him. He had his talent right to the finish.

CD: I'd love to get in contact with your friend, because - I mean Ted's an important figure in the Clay Vaudeville Company history. He must have worked for Harry for some 15 - 20 years.

CN: Yes, from a young man. Like a lot of those people they stayed with Harry, and became big stars you know. And of course as you know the three great comics of Australia all started with Harry Clay, Jim Gerald, Roy Rene and George Wallace.

CD: Is that right. I haven't found anything on Jim Gerald yet, but I've got some stuff on George Sorlie, who worked for Harry in the early days. And I've also found an ad for him working with Clay's in December 1917 - a period when he would have had his own business..

CN: He had his tent show - he did that for 25 years you know.

CD: Yes, so he must have been having a break from touring or something in Sydney.

CN: Yes, he often came off the tour and worked for Williamson's and the Tivoli organisations. He was a big star. He was a very clever performer, very versatile. He had a big following.

CD: That's something else I've been noticing - how versatile people were.

CN: They had to be to last. They had to do everything.

CD: There was a man, for instance - Lou Courtney was his name - who worked for Harry as a film operator, they called him an electrician, but he also did a plate spinning and balancing act.

CN: Yes. Well in Harry's time, too, he would always put film into his shows. There'd always be a projectionist in these town halls who understood these machines. Film was just starting then, as you know. It was very popular.

CD: Around the twenties would they still have been doing those illustrated songs?

CN: Oh yes. They were very popular.

CD: How did they work? Were they songs sung to moving pictures, or...?

CD: Oh yes, and reciting to coloured pictures on the screen. Coloured slides.

CN: So they used coloured slides to set the mood for a song.

CN: That's right. Then of course as you know the commercials, advertisements came out after that on coloured slides.

CD: Oh, so they'd do commercials?

CN: Yes. At the end of it. They were getting sophisticated. They'd use the screen to advertise all their wares. A big firm in Sydney used to run that. Really well known. That's how they came into the business those advertising firms.

CD: Right, so they'd advertise businesses or...

CN: Anything local. And there was always a big screen with every theatre, a house screen with all the advertisements of the village on them. The audiences would sit there through the interval - and there'd be the commercials printed on the screen.

CD: They're just the kind of little things you don't realise happened.

CN: That's how it started. It started because there was a need and a want. That's how they got there.

CD: Well it would have been extra revenue coming in for the company.

CN: Oh yes. And they were always looking for that.

CD: It's given me an idea that I should start looking back at the early days of advertising. Now I know that it was also being used in vaudeville as well.

CN: You know, too, that each theatre had its own orchestra. They stayed with the theatre. There was the pianist - Rooley, up at the Gaiety was there; and Peg, a beautiful violinist, and Wally the drummer. And out at Newtown there was another girl named Mary [Chesney], she was pianist, and the drummer, Teddy somebody-or-other and a violinist. They always had the three pieces.

CD: So it was piano, drums and violin?

CN: Yes, and they stayed together for years. They knew the show, and they knew how to handle the show. My word they were great. They knew how to keep the applause going and so forth. They were very useful indeed.

CD: So when you rehearsed your shows, they would rehearse with you also.

CN: Yes, oh yes.

CD: So you would rehearse for a couple of weeks?

CN: That's right. It wouldn't take long.

CD: And that show would go for about a month touring the Clay circuit?

CN: That's right. We were very confident with them. We'd have fun with them, you know. They were nice to work with. They understood you, oh it was lovely. They were like family. And the same audiences would be there on Friday nights. They'd take their family along, you know, year after year. They really got to know the artists, and they made their stars. There was such a lot of lovely talent around in those days, you know, because vaudeville was the thing. There was plenty of talent about. Quite clever, too. They would clean up most of these people on television today let me tell you.

CD: That's something I've become very aware of - today many people are surprised if they find out you can do one or two things really well, but in vaudeville you had to more than that. You had to do everything.

CN: You're absolutely right.

CD: Entertainers have generally lost that ability to be so versatile.

CN: Oh yes, the Australian was versatile. That's what made them such great performers even in the musical comedies. They were very versatile. Well you had to be to survive. It was the best way to make a living in entertainment. Films weren't that strong in those days, so therefore people depended on live entertainment. Concerts were on everywhere. And another thing that seems to have disappeared is the benefit concert. That was a leftover from the melodrama days. Benefits for some good cause, some good performer, some person or other. That's how we got a lot of our experience. We'd go on these benefits to help them. Weekends, Saturday nights, Sunday nights. And that's where we learned to make speeches on stage, you know. You'd get out there on stage and big-note yourself and so forth. I did that quite a bit throughout my life - curtain speeches. I always had good curtain speeches. I could stand there for ten minutes sometimes.

CD: Did you ever get into management yourself?

CN: The last few years before I retired, I took Charlie's Aunt through Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. I took the Williamson's farce A Worm's Eye View. And then I went into management myself down here, with Brent Randle, who built the St Martin's Theatre. We did Charlie's Aunt there. We called ourselves Everyman's Theatre Pty Ltd. We took a lovely little show called Springtime For Henry, an American farce for four people. So I had a go at management. That's where the speeches came in handy.

CD: How did you find management?

CN: Very good. Limited of course. You couldn't keep going back though. Films had become very popular by then, and of course I had got in with the Tivoli's and so forth. So I stayed with that. I did 23 musical comedies over the time. Some in London of course. I did them with Williamson's and a couple of independent managers.

CD: So how long did you perform on stage for?

CN: Sixty years.

CD: Sixty years! You must have liked it?

CN: You'd think I would have had enough of it wouldn't you. Then of course in the last few years I've devoted my time to writing. I've got three books going now. One on comedians, one on musical comedies, and one that I've got on the stocks now called Forgotten Heroines in Flesh-tights and Spotlights. That's in the hands of a lady who's doing the editing for me. And I've got 800 pictures for the one on comedians, and the musical comedy one, I've got 500 pictures. I've got to find publishers soon.

CD: You'll have to let me know when they do get published so that I

CN: Everyone will know, it'll be an event, let me tell you. There'll be no dodgers, that's for sure. [*we both laugh*]

CD: I'm just looking at the time, and I should let you go, but if I could ask you just one more thing, as I realise that you've probably already answered some things in the questionnaire I sent. I wanted to go back to the area of rehearsals. When you were rehearsing for your shows - where would you do it?

CN: In the theatres. Mostly at the Newtown Bridge or the Princess.

CD: So when you went on the suburban circuit, how did they provide the musical backing then? Did you have a band travel with you.

CN: Oh yes. They stayed with the show the musicians.

CD: All right. So there would be a house-band at say the Newtown Bridge who would stay there? And then at the Gaiety?

CN: Yes, and the Princess. They had a man there by the name of Bill Collins had the orchestra at the Princess. He was very good. He could write the music down for you, and so forth.

CD: And there would be some musicians who would travel on the road with you?

CN: Yes, exactly.

CD: I noticed the other day when looking through the 1910 Queensland tour, they had a different pianist at different places, and I was wondering whether they had someone travelling with them or whether they got somebody at different places.

CN: Oh no. They travelled with them. They were in charge of the show. We couldn't do without them. No ad libs, they were set men. Well rehearsed, and they were very good.

CD: So in terms of their role in the show they were almost like a conductor.

CN: Yes, exactly. Oh they were good men. We depended on them. They were excellent. Their timing was great. They understood the show beautifully.

CD: That's great. The music aspect of vaudeville interests me greatly, as I'm a musician and composer outside of academia. That and the fact that my father, who was an actor and singer, and my grand-father, who was a magician, provides me with an incentive to both keep the entertainment line continuing in the family, and to also help record the history of vaudeville which seems to be the start of my family's involvement in theatre in this country.

CN: It gives me a thrill to know that Harry Clay's history is being recorded. It should be because he was a big note in the early days of theatre. He found and made stars, made theatre, got people interested in theatre. Clay's audiences were in their hundreds. They kept the theatre going. It was wonderful.

CD: They're quite excited about it at the university.

CN: They should be. It's a very important thing indeed.

CD: Thank you. Well, I look forward to you sending me the notes you have been writing, with regard to the questionnaire. And if you could give me the address of the lady who is doing the history of Ted Tutty, I would be very appreciative. I'd love to talk to her.

CN: Yes I'll do that. She's a solicitor in Adelaide, only working part-time now of course.

CD: I've got quite a few little notes concerning Ted, and as he worked for Harry for such a long time - and seems to have

been quite a character - it would be good to get in contact with her.

CN: Well you keep up your good work. It's needed you know, because vaudeville has almost disappeared, and if it isn't recorded then people in the future won't know how important it was, and how popular. There were so many talented performers... I miss it. It was a great time in my life.

CD: Well, I shall certainly make sure that it is.

CN: That's wonderful. Well my friend I thank you again, and hope to talk to you soon.

CD: Thank you Mr Norman. Please give my regards to you wife.

CN: I will. God bless. Good-bye for now.

DOROTHY ROWE HOSKING

EXTRACT FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH DOROTHY LEANORA HOSKING

STAGE NAME: THEA ROWE

BORN: 27/2/1907

INTERVIEWER: MERLE COPPELL

DATE: 15/12/91

STANTON LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

[This extract from the interview begins with Thea talking about her first job as a telephonist... at six pounds a week.]

MC: How old would you have been then?

TR: I think I was about seventeen.

MC: So you stayed there for a year or two?

TR: Yes I did.

MC: And all the time dreaming of the theatre.

TR: All the time dreaming of the theatre, yes.

MC: So how did you start on that?

TR: Well I had very little hope of getting into the wonderful companies coming here, because in those days Australian artists were all pushed into the background. And everybody came from abroad. They brought the whole company with them, even people playing small parts, they were brought. They felt that they were superior and [that] they would present the best shows. And they stuck to their English ideas. Here you had very little chance of getting in. So it was suggested to me that I should... my singing teacher who was a Mrs Leonard, had a block of flats in Darlinghurst and she let one of these flats to theatre people. And she talked to them, and they were running shows at Clay's. Clay's was a series of theatres that used to travel round and round the suburbs. And people said, 'Oh don't have anything to do with them, they're very third rate.' But on the other hand Mrs Leonard said I would get the right experience there, [and that] they were all truly professional people, and I would learn a lot. And she spoke to them, and the first person she spoke to was the famous 'Mo', Roy Rene. Now you couldn't have anybody better known than Roy Rene in Australia. And dear old Mo, he was very very kind to me. He took me down there and arranged an audition for me. And I sang some songs and read some scripts for them and they engaged me. After that I just travelled around from one suburb to another with their show. Doing the same show of course - a week here and a week there. And we began the first one at the Bridge Theatre at Newtown. And then we went to the Gaiety in Oxford Street, not very far from Hyde Park. And that was many weeks, and then they changed the show. Roy Rene went away to the country and other producers came in and you had some more education with a strange producer and strange artists to work with, and it was very very good experience.

MC: You mentioned to me that you came to the Independent Theatre at North Sydney during that time.

TR: Yes, the Independent Theatre. I can't remember its name [Coliseum]. But that was one of the theatres on the weekly journey from place to place. Yes.

MC: And who was in charge of the theatre or working at the theatre at that time?

TR: I don't remember.

MC: Was Doris Fitton...

TR: Oh no. It was a long time before Doris Fitton. It was just a theatre which was there for hire by anyone who wanted to put on a show.

MC: That was the theatre in Miller Street?

TR: Yes. The very same place that became the Independent.

MC: And those shows. It was a mixture for you of singing and dancing, acting?

TR: Yes, acting in little sketches, and it was wonderful because sometimes you'd have to be an old lady in a sketch and when you were very young you had to learn to put on old clothes, an old voice, and an old face without changing your makeup. And then you'd be somebody young. And then you'd be in a group of people doing a little dance. And then you'd be singing your own solos. One thing that I remember - I used to have to sing a duet with a man, and he was rather large and

fat, and I was rather small and very skinny. And I think that he hated having to sing a duet with me because we didn't look right together.

MC: Your mother was quite approving of your career.

TR: Oh yes. My mother had a very very beautiful voice - a contralto. An outstanding voice, and she should have had a wonderful career, but alas she was deaf. Very deaf, which spoilt her chances of ever doing anything in public. She helped me with my singing, and she really approved of me doing something professionally if I got the chance.

MC: So she was totally supportive of you?

TR: Yes.

MC: And of course you lived at home, too.

TR: Yes, I lived at home, and my father, who had died of course many years before then, he was a man who used to - when we had parties at home - recite comic poetry. Very amusing, and [he] would break into - they didn't use the word tap dance in those days, they called them the step dance, they were old dances which were handed down from the north of England possibly - and he'd been taught them by somebody, and he used to always get up and do his funny little bits and his dance, and everybody loved him.

MC: Your background was gearing you for the theatre.

TR: Oh yes it was. I was meant to do it.

MC: Your mother I guess went to your shows to see you performing and must have been very proud of you?

TR: Oh yes she did. It was very good. She never worried about me being at Clay's. She thought the people were just ordinary hardworking people. They weren't villains at all.

MC: And you were a young girl. So you could have been subjected to all sorted of pressures which as a young girl would have been difficult to cope with. How did you find the theatrical world then.

TR: Well you see, my mother was a very trusting woman and she thought everything was going to be all right with me, and she didn't give me any instruction in going out to the world and dealing with young men at all. But I found the people very brotherly and fatherly and friendly and helpful. They did everything they could to help. They always treated you as a young kid. And there was no trouble with them at all.

MC: Sounds like a very happy sort of atmosphere.

TR: Yes it was.

MC: And when you were moving around the suburbs did you have to find your own transport or did you go as a group?

TR: No we went as a group. Yes they took us.

MC: That would be important because there would be late night trips home.

TR: Oh yes.

MC: So they really looked after you?

TR: Oh yes they did. Yes. I couldn't say anything but good of them.

[The interview then continues into other non-related areas]

ROBERT KIRK

EXTRACT FROM INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT KIRK

BORN: 1915

INTERVIEWER: LIANNE HALL

DATE: 15 NOVEMBER 1996

STANTON LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RK: those were the days when - the Union De Luxe was the picture show. You wouldn't remember that. Right opposite your library.

LH: I know where that was, though, yeah.

RK: Yeah, that was it. And Clay's Vaudeville was next - Clay's was first.

LH: Did you ever go to Clay's Vaudeville?

RK: Yes, I remember going there. I can remember them - staying with my uncle - that was the one who used to drive the tug and I used to go on the Saturday with him while he was going round the Harbour. And on the Saturday night his wife, he had no children, they'd take me down and I - always fell asleep and they had to carry me home. They used to be mad. But - there used to be a sort of - vaudeville, and there'd be these fellows - nigger minstrels and all that, you know. That's - all I can remember of that place. But that was Clay's.....

BENITA BREBACH

EXTRACT FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH BENITA BREBACH (NEE HARVEY)

BORN: 11 AUGUST 1934

INTERVIEWER: MARGARET PARK

DATE: 25 MARCH 1991

STANTON LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

- MP:** Benita, the building we are in, The Independent Theatre, dates back to 1886. Could you tell me from your experience what you know about the history of the building and its significance to North Sydney?
- BB:** Well, history of the Theatre? - 1889 - yes, I'm probably more concerned with its theatrical history. The earlier history from the time - before Doris Fitton moved in to the Theatre is interesting - it was a rather chequered history actually - it was a variety theatre, vaudeville, Harry Clay had it on his no. 2 circuit of the Sydney suburban theatres.
- MP:** Is that like vaudeville?
- BB:** Yes, or live or legitimate theatre as well, but you see there were city theatres, but they were the No. 1 important theatres but all the way through the suburbs there were what were called the No. 2 circuit - and this theatre, being at North Sydney was part of a No. 2 circuit and Harry Clay was here for quite some time - I think after Harry Clay died, I believe, it was converted into an amusement parlour - for a time, it also - I know was a roller skating rink in the early part of this century and then of course in the first World war it became a munitions factory - after that its a little indistinct as to what various purposes it served but it was primarily a theatre.....

MILVA GROVER

EXTRACT FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH MILVA GROVER

BORN: 1907

INTERVIEWER: LIANNE HALL

DATE: 20 FEBRUARY 1996

STANTON LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

[Note: Milva Grover's father Frederick Albert Lear, an artificial limb maker, leased the theatre (known as Clay's Coliseum Theatre) for some time on nights when it wasn't being used by Clay's.]

- MG:** Albert must have had it for a couple of years - I don't know what happened. I didn't know he'd go in for those sort of things. I 'spose he must have leased that place in Ridge Street called the Independent - I don't know what it was called then. It had Clay's Vaudeville on. So he must have just leased that, and I used to go there when I was about eight. [From her date of birth I'd suggest at least eleven years of age]
- LH:** What was Clay's vaudeville like?
- MG:** Oh, funny. I'll never forget the day I went - the acting on the stage. Someone stole the diamonds and nobody knew. There were detectives everywhere, and someone in the house stood up and said, "He's the one. He's the one who stole the diamonds." She was from the audience. Oh they used to be right into it. I can always remember it. I'll never forget that. It was a woman that stood up... That's all I can remember of that. I don't know how long he [Clay] had that.
- LH:** So there were plays and short skits by the sounds of it at Clay's.
- MG:** Yes, they had like little plays on, you know, and I suppose people dancing in the other ones. I only went once to it.

APPENDIX I

HARRY CLAY: QUOTATIONS

MISCELLANEOUS QUOTATIONS BY AND ABOUT HARRY CLAY

The quotations included in this appendix mostly concern Harry Clay, both as an individual and as the head of his vaudeville company. Naturally the list is not an exhaustive one, but serves simply to allow one an impression of Clay as published through the various periodicals of the day, and the occasional references to him in later years. Quotations relating specifically to Clay's Queensland tours are included in Appendix C. The list has been compiled according to the year of publication.

1892

- Messrs. Clay and [Charles] Hudson won the approval of the house by their rendition of the duet "Pilot Brave." Mr Alf M. Hazlewood was the interlocutor, and Mr Frank Yorke and Mr Harry Clay were heartily applauded for their contributions (SMH: 6 Sept. 1892, 6).

1893

- The sentimental songs of Mr Henry Townley, Mr Henry Clay and Mr J.S. Porter were as effectively rendered as ever, and the vocalists were liberally applauded for their first class singing (SMH: 17 July 1893, 6).
- One of the best contributions in the first part of the programme was Mr Henry Clay's rendering of the tuneful ballad "Log Cabin in the Dell" (SMH: 7 Aug. 1893, 7).
- Among the items in [the first part] may be mentioned Miss Blanche Montague's "Kathleen Ashore," and Mr Harry Clay's "Sadie Ray," both of which were meritorious performances (SMH: 23 Oct. 1893, 6)

1898

- * In the first part, miscellaneous in character, the corner men (Messrs Wal Rockley, Tom Edwards, Frank Yorke, and Alf Rockley), with the interlocutor (Mr Harry Clay), filled in the intervals between the items with crispy jokes, all devoid of the "chestnut" hall mark, and in addition did turns in the special lines by which they have made their reputations (BC: 5 Dec. 1898, 4).

1900

- Mr Harry Clay, a tenor vocalist of no mean order, met with a splendid reception, and had to respond to encores (NM: 18 Sept. 1900, 2).

1901

- A Waxworks and Variety Show. - Elsewhere Mr Clay tells our readers he is visiting West Maitland, and brings with him a splendid waxworks collection.... The variety company is a strong cast as it includes the names of Mr Sam Wilson... the Smith Sisters... little Essie Clay (the child vocalist who is a great favourite here), Mr Will Bracey... and, of course, the redoubtable Harry himself.... The hall should be crowded nightly, Mr Clay's name being sufficient to guarantee that he is bringing along first-class entertainment (MDM: 14 Feb. 1901, 2).
- Mr Clay's dance and club swinging act deserved the well-merited encore it gained (QT: 19 Mar. 1901, 3)

1909

- In building up his City and Suburban Vaudeville Company into the success it is to-day, Harry Clay has succeeded where dozens before him failed. Harry takes the liveliest interest in every individual turn, reveling in it if it is at all good with the enthusiasm of a youth who is at an entertainment for the first time in his life; and on the other hand, sympathising with the performer, and trying to drop him a serviceable hint or two, if the item is not just what it ought to be. As for the performance itself, the stage-manager of a mammoth pantomime could not be more taken up with his first-night's production than Harry is with his show every night in the week all the year round. It is this ever-present geniality, this ever-present energy, and this ever-present

watchfulness on the part of Harry - for the men and women in his employ on the one hand, and for the servicing up of his entertainment in the best possible way on the other - that endears him at once to performers, and has likewise earned him the goodwill of the public by always ensuring them an excellently-run and excellently-presented show (TT: June 1909, 18).

- Mr Clay's position in the suburbs to-day is that of, say, the Tivoli in the city. His company is quite an accepted institution, and one that is here to stay - assuredly and permanently (TT: Sept. 1909, 18).
- It is a great throw-in for residents outside the city to have the opportunity of enjoying, once a week, a really excellent evening's amusement right at their very doors. This is what Mr Clay seeks to give them; and the success which is attending his efforts is becoming more pronounced every month - large and appreciative audiences being his reward nightly, and the limitations of the different buildings alone being responsible for the gatherings to hear his company not being even greater than they are. Mr Clay's position in the suburbs to-day is that of, say the Tivoli in the city. His company is quite an accepted institution, and one that is here to stay - assuredly and permanently (TT: Sept. 1909, 18).
- The weekly visits (to the suburbs) are anxiously awaited by many a family that could not possibly journey to Sydney City to see the sights and hear the latest music. What they did before Clay's Company brought the newest turns out to them one can only surmise (TT: Oct. 1909, 23).

1910

- His voice - a fine tenor - was heard to much advantage and the number ("Larboard Watch") was one of the most attractive items of the evening (DB: 1 July 1910, 4).
- Mr. Harry Clay delighted the audience with a fine rendition of "The Anvil Chorus" in which he was supported by the members of the company (DB: 5 July 1910, 4).
- "Yes," said Mr Harry Clay, speaking to the Theatre the other day. "For the present I have entirely given up my city and suburban vaudeville circuit. The picture shows, particularly in the suburbs, have proved too much for me. I have been playing in and around Sydney for the past five years. I think I have been the most successful man in Australia, so far as city and suburban vaudeville is concerned. I am leaving Sydney to join my Queensland show at Rockhampton on June 30. I shall be returning, to Sydney about the end of August, when I may give the city and suburbs another try in the matter of vaudeville. I was born at Singleton (N.S.W); I first appeared with amateurs; and it was really at Newcastle that I came to take to the stage as a profession. Yes; 'Underneath the Maple' was one of my favourites. I sang it for nearly 25 years. But I sang 'Essie Dear' even longer than that. It was after 'Essie Dear' I called my daughter - Essie. Perhaps there is no harm in my saying that often after singing the same song for 10 or 15 years I have been approached by an admirer with the remark, 'That is a fine song you have just got hold of.' Never mind how old I am. I have been on the stage since I was a boy." Mr Walter Whyte of the Sydney Amphitheatre said he is a regular white man. There are very few indeed who will dissent from this. Mr Whyte's estimate of Harry Clay (is) the highest tribute anyone could ask for (TT: July 1910, 25).

1911

- "I would not open in the suburbs in summer-time, if I had the best performers on earth. The biggest trouble is that the picture-shows charge three-pence and a penny. The result is that it is impossible to compete against them. The penny charge is supposed to apply to children; but they would pass you in for a penny, even if you were as big as Dick Barker, the Queensland giant, and could hand them down a star. People come in to the city from the suburbs to go to the theatre. It does not matter what they have to pay. They will go to that theatre - even if the programme is not half as good as the one might be giving them at their very door. The idea they get into their heads is that your company must necessarily be inferior in the suburbs. Consequently, this fact also tells against the vaudeville-man in catering for suburbanites." Speaking enthusiastically of Queensland, he further said, "Towns are springing up that you would never have dreamt of playing in a few years ago. Today you can take a good-sized company into them, with most payable results" (TT: Oct. 1911, 29).

1912

- J.C. Bain is getting a big following at the Princess Theatre and in the suburbs. As regards the suburbs, he has succeeded where even that favourite and experienced general, Harry Clay, failed. Mr Bain has 80 artistes on his salary-list (TT Apr. 1912, 18).

1914

- [Harry Clay's] solo singing in the first part is an object lesson in deportment for those younger singers who imagine they are of some account in the concert world. Mr Clay is also displaying his ability as a character actor in the farce, and scores well (AV: 29 Apr. 1914, 35).

- Harry Clay celebrated a birthday last Sunday. It wouldn't do to tell you just how old this well-known manager is, but suffice it to say that he is (apart from his gray hairs) as young looking as when the writer first heard him warbling "Elsie of the Glen," about twenty three years ago. A smart dresser, and of fine personality, Mr Clay is still a powerful factor as a vaudeville artist (AV: 13 May 1914, n. pag).
- "If Mr (Jimmy) Craydon and Harry Clay were clergymen, we would never miss Mass on Sundays." Remark by an old dame from the gallery at the Princess Theatre (AV: 29 July 1914, 8).
- In 1914 Harry proposed that Horace Bent was the greatest nigger comedian the world has had, and absolutely the funniest blank ever born. "If Beaumont Read were alive today," he added, "he would send them crazy. There are many alto voices, certainly; but his was the only also of the kind ever heard in Australia. And to think of the hardships such men suffered! Others with not a fraction of their gifts are today getting more for a week than they earned in three months. Except for a few comedians the performers of the present time - in minstrel-work and vaudeville, I mean - are not to be compared with the men of twenty years ago. Comparatively speaking the lot of the artist to-day is truly a bed of roses" (TT; Sept. 1914, 25).

1915

- Harry Clay's Bridge Theatre has discarded vaudeville in favour of drama. The change was inevitable, as audiences were tired of seeing the same old faces - week after week - for years. Said Mr Clay to the writer some time ago: "There's a fine crimson lot of cerise individuals around. They come begging for work, when most of them ought to be out on the railway deviation works with a ruddy pick in their hands. The blanky cows very seldom learn a new song or business, and then wonder why they don't get cardinal work. One of these days I'll cut all these adjectives out, and put in popular drama. Then I'll be rid of some of these flaming pests." And now the inevitable has happened. Mr Clay is ever forceful in his remarks, but there is every justification in this instance (AV: 6 Jan. 1915, 8).
- Harry Clay himself opened the bill, and proved that he is still to be classed with the front-rank of singers (AV: 7 Apr. 1915, n. pag).
- "If we could only get two nights like it," [Saturday nights] says Harry Clay to TT, "we would be satisfied. But except [on that night] there is nothing doing" (TT: June 1915, 47)
- Harry Clay has such an unlimited stock of after-dinner stories that he is thinking of publishing them in book form, as "Harry Clay's Winning Post Annual." He will be assisted in this work by Arthur Morley, who will write the preface to the edition. Some choice stories can be guaranteed (AV: 1 Sept. 1915, n. pag.).
- Harry Clay is synonymous with generosity; this is the reason he has for the time being, turned over his private dressing-room to Arthur Morley. Judging by the improvement in Arthur's beauty, he must have found out where his white-haired friend keeps his facial dressing, for no ordinary greasepaints can make Morley as beautiful as he looks in the present revue (AV: 17 Nov. 1915, n. pag.).
- In reference to Australian performers Harry Clay stated to the Theatre: "Why don't they get something fresh? For year after year they will do nothing but the same old thing, with the result that the public get sick of them, and it is impossible for any manager who relies wholly on them - as I have done - to make a do of his show. There are two course open to the Australian artist," said Clay - "either get out of Australia, when he has sufficiently worked the Australian field, or to get out of the business altogether." In reply the magazine wrote, "the Australian artist has never had in a small way two better friends than Harry Clay and Jimmy Bain" (TT: June 1915, 50).

1916

- Harry Clay wishes it known that he is not connected with any vaudeville show now playing the suburbs and using his name, or has he given anyone permission to use his name in connection with any show. The only theatre he is connected with at present is the Bridge Theatre, Newtown (AV: 26 Apr. 1916, 1).

1917

- Harry Clay says he would like to have all the bobs one prominent racing man is supposed to have got for tea money in the old days! Harry says the battlers nowadays are not to be compared to the old ones, and he is not losing any sleep over the Majestic (AV: 20 June 1917, 22).
- Harry Clay is still keeping the flag flying prosperously at the Newtown Bridge Theatre (Sydney). There isn't a more consistently hard-working vaudeville manager in Australia than the same Harry (TT: Nov. 1917, 33).

1918

- Harry Clay's company, consisting of Ted Stanley, Geo Walton, Phillip Sisters, Lalla Ward, Lulu Eugene, Ern Crawford, Jas Caldwell, the Lateens and George Sorlie, played to a capacity house at the "Bunyip's" [Andy Kerr's] Boomerang Theatre, Coogee Beach on Wednesday. Harry sends his Coogee Patrons the best artists to be obtained in Australia, and deserves the good patronage extended to him (AV: 25 Jan. 1918, 18).
- A Boost for Harry Clay - A pro writes:- "How many of us owe a debt of gratitude to Harry Clay? This manager is the real friend of the local performer, and those who support his shows assist Australian talent. Ever ready to advise an act, Mr Clay assists in getting best results from those who would otherwise find things very awkward but for him" (AV: 1 Feb. 1918, n. pag.).
- On the final night of Harry Sadler's season [22/3/18] at the Princess Theatre, Harry Clay's season [starting 23rd] was introduced by Mr Morley. "Said Morley, in a well-delivered little speech ... There has never been a more respected name than Mr Clay's in the vaudeville history of Australia." So, too, think the public - judging by the enthusiastic applause with which Mr Morley's statement respecting Mr Clay was received (TT: Apr. 1918, 33).
- Composed by Harry Clay was the successful duet sung by Caldwell and Crawford on Saturday night last entitled, "When the Leaves Came Drifting Down." A few more numbers such as this would not go amiss if Harry could let us have them. This one's certainly a winner in every way (AV: 30 Mar 1918, 13).
- "Oh Fair!" When you hear Harry Clay say this, when you ask him what sort of a house he has, you can bet your last sixpence he has a "good 'un." Last Saturday night he could not get another one into the Princess Theatre, and when asked what it was like he smiled and said, "Oh Fair," then he started to tell funny stories. If it had not been fair, there would have been no stories. When he was asked how his house was at Manly, he used to start and tell you about his beautiful tent (AV: 22 Mar. 1918, n. pag.).
- Harry Clay and George Sorlie made quite a hit at the Princess Theatre last Saturday, when they did a double dance. The handsome and ever-young Harry is in excellent singing voice at present, and is a big acquisition to the vocal side of the bill (AV: 10 May 1918, 3).
- One of the best programmes of all-vaudeville seen at this theatre [Bridge Theatre] for some time. Long before seven thirty, Saturday, the theatre was packed, and hundreds turned away (AV: 9 Aug. 1918, 7).

1919

- Harry Clay's face is all smiles, and it should be considering the packed houses he has nightly at his [Newtown] theatre. No doubt about it, he leaves nothing wanting in the way of amusements for the patrons of his theatres (AV: 25 Jan. 1919 n. pag.).
- Harry Clay says in the old vaudeville days, when Frank Clark used to take companies out to the country towns, and bad business came along, the artists never received a razoo, and those were the first to take their hats off to Frank when they landed back in Sydney (AV: 27 June 1919, 8).
- AV: review of On Deck by Arthur Morley. "The whole show is scintillating with animation, colour, and humour, and offerings of its kind should do much towards keeping the standard of Clay bravely in the fore-front of North Sydney patrons. With such productions brought to their door, suburbanites are going to have no trouble in seeing a metropolitan show, for the present class of entertainment is well up to the equal of a majority of the city shows." [Kitch] (AV: 6 Sept. 1919, n. pag.).
- Harry Clay has a fine show at Kerr's Gaiety Theatre this week, and it will be followed, from week to week, by another equally as good. Many of Australia's best performers are on this manager's par-roll, and he is ever on the look-out for the best available talent (AV: 27 Nov. 1919, 9).

1920

- Harry Clay attributes the sustained interest of packed houses nightly to the fact that frequent changes of programmes and companies is the rule and not the exception. Seeing the same faces, week after week, is apt to pall, but when there is a spell in between, there is no monotony. To see a Saturday night at both the Bridge and Princess Theatre is a treat for the vaudeville fan. On these occasions the houses are crammed to their utmost capacity. The same state of affairs is now observed at the Gaiety, where Mr Clay presents a brand-new bill every week (AV: 18 Mar. 1920, 3).
- Harry Clay is probably the oldest manager, in experience, in Australia. Although connected with theatrical business for about thirty-five years - if not more - there are those who will tell you that apart from his silvery hair, "Harry Clay is as young looking as when we first knew him, over thirty years ago; yes, sir!" There is nothing like feeling just as young as you can, but when a man looks a decade more youthful than he is then good luck to him. Mr Clay doesn't appear ten years younger than he actually is - he looks twenty! (AV: 29 Apr. 1920, n. pag.).

- Harry Clay is contemplating adding a couple more theatres to his circuit, just to make it the half-dozen. There is no greater battler in Sydney than the same Harry; he can still do a hard day's graft with the best of them, and he is in the happy position of being in Easy-Street for the rest of his life. His Watson's Bay tenants presented him with an address the other day, which was much appreciated (AV: 18 June 1920, 7).
- We hear Harry Clay is booking up some fine over the odds acts for his vaudeville circuit. This is as it should be. With the exception of Fullers and McIntosh, he should command all the best to be had, and the paying patrons want to see a few more faces with some new and original stuff badly (AV: 22 July 1920, 21).
- Outside of the Fullers, there is no vaudeville entrepreneurs of note, if except Mr Harry Clay, whose city and suburban circuit is limited to Sydney, and whose artistes are the best available. His programmes are very good indeed, but he, like other managers, would be much better pleased were he able to select from a wider range of artists. With business acumen he has signed up the best local talent, and also an occasional overseas act that has terminated its Fuller engagement, so that outside of Clay and Fuller acts there are very few artists available (AV: Sept. 1920, 4).
- Rozelle is one of the sites proposed to bump Ted Betts. What with Sir Rupert Clark's new place.... and now Rozelle, someone will fall with a wallop. Harry Clay may reap a rich harvest out of the new building scheme also. Harry is always ready to negotiate (AV: 1 Oct. 1920, 13).
- Mr Clay was associated with most of the old-time minstrel performers. As a quartette of endmen, he says Australia will never again see the equal of Horace Bent, Sam Keenan, Alf Moynham, and Alf Lawrence [sic - Lawton] (at his best). His opinion is that Bent never had a superior in the whole world (TT: Mar. 1920, 25).
- It says much for the popularity of Harry Clay's shows when after one of the hottest days on record - last Saturday - Ted Stanley's new company played to a full house. Popular artists, popular prices, is the Clay slogan. The orchestra, under the baton of J. T. Knibbs, the new conductor, showed a decided improvement (AV: 3 Dec. 1920, 16).

1922

- Remarkably fine entertainments are being provided by Harry Clay at his three Sydney theatres - the Princess, the Gaiety, and Newtown Bridge. Well-covered, too, are the suburbs by his touring companies, with the result that with theatre-goers generally Mr Clay's name has become more and more a household word. Australian talent owes a lot to Mr Clay. Any act with the least promise in it can always get a show with him. In this way he is responsible for bringing out some of the finest performers Australia has produced. But it is first and foremost as a stand-by to Australians - employing them by the hundred year in and year out - that he will ever be most gratefully remembered (TT: May 1922, 24).
- Australian material of any promise is always sure of getting a show with Mr Clay. Thus, with fresh performers coming on, the engagement of whatever meritorious acts that may be offering, and the transference from house to house of established favourites, the popular Harry has no difficulty in giving his patrons plenty of variety. And it is variety in vaudeville that tells! (TT: July 1922, 21).
- Excellent business was done everywhere during the holiday season. Of course Mr Clay is not in the game for the good of his health. At the same time the many thousands who are unable to visit the heart of the city for their entertainment have reason to be thankful to him for the opportunity of enjoying - the whole year round - a well-conducted, diversified show right at their very doors (TT: Jan 1923, 20).

1923

- With the advent of the Ada Reeve Co. to Fullers' Theatre (Sydney) vaudeville there for the present is off. George Marlow at the Grand Opera House is of course doing pantomime. The result is that in vaudeville Harry G. Musgrave (Tivoli) and Harry Clay (Princess, Gaiety and Newtown Bridge) have Sydney between them (TT: Jan. 1923, 20).
- Harry Clay reports a particularly good month at his Sydney shows - the Gaiety, Princess and Newtown Bridge. Quick changes are the order with Mr Clay. Artists are moved on from one theatre to the other, with the result that patrons are always sure of seeing a succession of fresh faces - except in the case of established favourites. Some of these have - and are justifying - what appears to be a life-long engagement (TT: Apr. 1923, 29).
- A great deal of the best in Australian talent is always on show at these theatres. But besides the merit in the acts themselves they are invariably presented by Mr Clay in such a manner as to get their full 100 per cent value (TT: May 1923, 17).
- Friends of Mr Clay throughout Australia will regret to hear that in health he is still far from being his old accustomed self. Still, he is well enough to take an active interest in his business; and the assurance of the doctor who has been attending him is that with care he has nothing to fear (TT: June 1923, 27).

- At any of his three theatres... there's always something to delight you - something to give you a laugh, however case-hardened you may be. Mr Clay is really the patron saint of the Australian performer. And how many hungry homes would there be, if it were not for the commercial-showman genius of Harry. For the simple, truthful fact is - the generous Sir Benjamin Fuller himself would be the first to admit it - that nobody in Australia has surpassed Mr Clay in the employment of Australian-born artists (TT: July 1923, 17).
- Harry Clay keeps up his standard of always giving patrons plenty for their money, and some of the turns are exceedingly good (TT: Sept. 1923, 29).

1925

- At the funeral, which took place at the South Head Cemetery last Thursday, a large and representative gathering was present. In fact, it can safely be said that no more fitting tribute to a deceased manager has ever been noted in this country, for old-timers, and those of today gathered round the graveside to pay their last respects to one who, had done so much to promote the well-being of the Australian performer (E: 25 Feb. 1925, 4).
- Many old time performers paid their last respects to a much-esteemed gentleman. As a matter of fact, the occasion probably saw more Australian performers congregated together than at any other period in the history of the business (E: 25 Feb 1925, 32).

1957

- One man destined to rank among the greatest of Australian comedians was summarily fired by Clay's manager. The comedian went to Harry Clay. "Give me another chance, Mr Clay," he said. "I'll prove I can make the grade." Clay thought it over. "No man challenges me that I don't take it up," he replied. "I'll give you another chance." Years later when the comedian was a top-liner, Clay took him by the hand and said: "I see you kept your promise" (MA: 3 July 1957, n. pag.).



Plate 20

The grave of Harry, Kate and Essie Clay
South Head Cemetery (Sydney)
(Clay Djubal)

APPENDIX J

HARRY CLAY: ANECDOTES

ANECDOTES ABOUT HARRY CLAY AND HIS COMPANY

Miscellaneous Anecdotes Without Specific Reference to Years

- Just before the First World War, Clay's was showing at Bathurst. Harry called a rehearsal for 10 am. When he walked into the hall at 10.30, the only person he could see was comedian Will Wynand. Clay went into a frenzy: "Where the devil are all those so an so performers?" he shouted, spluttering the question with a flow of invective that lasted two minutes. Wynand came to his feet. "Please Mr Clay," he protested, "my wife [Lulu Eugene] is behind that curtain dressing." Clay walked to the curtain. "Are you there Lulu?" he asked. "Yes Mr Clay." "Well," he added apologetically, "I'm sorry you heard me, but if you had to work with a mob of Australian @#%!" then followed another stream of adjectives – "you'd swear too."

At this time Harry Clay had a dapper little English manager, Jim Boyle. When a circuit went north on a Queensland tour, it was Boyle's job to write ahead and book local school of arts. The company arrived at one small town to find no booking had been made. That afternoon Harry Clay received Boyle's letter back from the dead letter office. It was addressed to "The Caretaker, School of Arts, Queensland." At that minute Boyle walked in swinging his cane. Clay abused him roundly till he ran out of breath. Boyle was crestfallen: "You know Mr Clay," he said. "I ought to be kicked." A happy smile lit Harry Clay's face. He jumped to his feet and delivered a mighty blow with his boot that Boyle was still rubbing days after ("Sometimes" ARG: 3 July 1959, n. pag.)

- Once an English comedian new to Australia came to [Harry Clay]. "Mr Clay," he said. "I'm Clark Time. I'm a comedian." Clay looked at his credentials and decided on the spot to give him an act at the Bridge [Theatre] the following night. The comedian was a little wary of Australian audiences. He warmed himself up with plenty of Dutch courage from a bottle before he went on stage. Result was he got his lines mixed while his voice came out in great croaks. Clay called him from the wings: "Mark Time. Are you ready? Quick March!" As the little Englishman was leaving the theatre, Harry Clay slipped a five pound note into his pocket ("Audiences" NP: 23 Sept. 1951, n. pag.).

- Harry Clay, King of Vaudeville stood on the footpath in Castlereagh St., opposite the old Tivoli Theatre. Outside the theatre he saw his top comedian, Ted Tutty. Clay rammed a couple of fingers into his mouth and whistled. Tutty went down on all fours and as the traffic clattered to a halt crawled slowly across the road. He came up to his employer and licked his hand. Clay patted him on the head. "You're a good pooch, Teddy." He said. "Be on time tonight, or I'll down you." Then he went his way. Even the policeman on duty at the corner of King and Castlereagh streets showed no surprise at these antics. Everyone in Sydney knew Harry Clay ("Audiences" NP: 23 Sept. 1951, n. pag.).

- One of the big tasks was to offer a forthcoming attraction that would ensure a full house at the next show. [Jimmy] Boyle had the job one night. He had heard Miss Annie Jones sing privately and decided to build her up..... "Thank you for your attendance," Boyle told the audience. "I want to say that next Friday night you will be given the honour of hearing the greatest soprano voice ever produced in the country." For ten minutes he kept the audience sitting while he built up Annie Jones' reputation. After the show some of the audience came back stage: "Is this fair dinkum?" they asked. "My oath, it is." Next Friday the theatre was packed. They all came to hear the new Australian nightingale. Miss Jones was the last act. She waddled on to the stage. There was deep silence. She opened her mouth. From it came a voice so thin the orchestra leader in the pit could hardly hear it. The audience stayed still for a minute. Then all hell broke loose. The mob raged and roared. Missiles of every description were thrown at the unhappy soprano. Boyle ducked out the stage door. He could still hear the shouting as he disappeared up King Street ("Sometimes" ARG: 3 July 1957, n. pag.).

- Harry Clay was a shrewd showman. When travelling through the country with his shows you would see this significant figure at the front of the theatre or hall with a bookmaker's bag slung over his shoulder, taking the money and giving the necessary tickets. Harry trusted no man (Norman, 245).

- So much of this kind of variety went "bush" and was started by Harry Rickards. But there were travelling bush drama companies on the road. Harry Clay, himself a comic singer, had travelling companies before he started in Sydney. These travelling shows seldom played city dates, preferring to stay with the one horse towns where they were sure to be appreciated, and where they also had built up strong friendships with the folk who travelled miles though dusty roads to enjoy them (Norman, 130).

Anecdotes Arranged According to the Years Published

1910

- In the interval Mr Clay explained that his company had advertised to show the moving picture of The Funeral of the Late King Edward. He regretted that they would be unable to do so, because the film that had been sent to them was not quite up to his expectation. They had shown it at Longreach and he was not satisfied with it. An excellent film of the funeral of King Edward was now being shown in Rockhampton by Mr G. H. Birch. He [Mr Clay] had seen it, and it was a very fine picture. He had now been before the public for many years and had no desire to show anything that was not of the best description. Mr Clay's manly speech was loudly applauded (DB: 1 July 1910, 4).
- One of the attractive features of the performance was the fine rendition of the song "Ireland's Rights" by Mr. Harry Clay, who was in splendid voice. In the illustrated song "The Black Sheep Loves You Better Than Them All" Mr Clay was heard again to much advantage (DB: 6 July 1910, 4).

1911

- Early in 1911 on the tender putting out from Mackay to catch the boat for Brisbane were the members of the Fasola Vaudeville Co. and the Harry Clay Co. An old cripple approached Fasola for the few shillings he happened to need to enable him to get to his wife and children a little way out of Brisbane. Fasola had done exceptionally good business in Mackay, largely as a result of his management having secured the hall which Mr Clay for years had been in the habit of playing in. Hearing of his plight, Mr Clay immediately hunted up the ancient derelict, and promptly have him five times the amount that he wanted. A white man always is the generous, big-hearted Harry! (TT: May 1912, 29).

1912

- Mr Harry Sadler has often worked with Mr Harry Clay. One of the songs he used to sing was "Studying the Doctor's orders." In this get-up he had a swag on his back. Mr Clay says that sometimes when Mr Sadler was singing this he used to shout to him from behind the scenes:- "If I had my way, I'd strap that swag to your back, and make you carry it to Melbourne" (TT: Dec. 1912, 33).

1914

- After the Randwick races Harry Clay said to Jimmy Bain, "I won 250 pounds straight out on Portrush, and nipped them for 310 pounds on Simon Frisco in the Final Handicap. Those were the only two bets I had." Bain replied, "On Epsom Day they hit me to leg for 280 pounds. But on Monday, Gilgandra's win in the first race – the Shorts – was worth 600 pounds to me. As this left me a trifle over 300 pounds to the good, I just hopped into my car and told the driver to run me up the mountains for the rest of the day." And then the two of them – Mr Clay and Mr Bain – simultaneously woke up! (TT: Nov. 1914, 28).
- Harry Clay, one of the most popular of Australian managers, was the only newcomer during the day [to a Chasers day out on Sydney Harbour]. His subsequent initiation was carried out in great style. Mel Brewer, the baritone, who is now fulfilling an engagement under Mr Clay's management, was very solicitous as to his chief's welfare, and attended on him faithfully during the day... During [the] fishing operation, Clay showed us that he was no novice by the manner in which he handled and securely landed a very large fish. As a throwing expert, he was very prominent at times, and put in some clever work with banana and other peel (AV: 3 June 1914, n. pag.).

1915

- Harry Clay is the whole life now of the Watson's Bay ferry, and he has a good audience of "sports" listening to his after dinner stories (AV: 5 May 1915, 4).
- When tapped for a loan it was Harry Clay's custom, before responding, to lecture the applicant as to the evils of smoking and drinking. "Why," asked Mr Clay, "don't you give it up? It's no use telling me you can't. Look at me! I neither smoke nor drink. When I say a thing I do it. I've got no time for a man who hasn't got the backbone to stick to what he says." Once Mr Clay struck a performer, who instead of standing dejectedly before him until he'd got what he asked for, showed some inclination to argue the point. "But Mr Clay," he declared, "I've often heard you say that you were going to give up horseracing." he got no further. "Oh," reported Mr Clay impatiently; "betting's another thing altogether." Since then Mr Clay has been a lot more chary about giving "biters" the chance of touching what is in his case a very tender spot (TT: June 1915, 7).
- The other Saturday afternoon a hard-up looking old fellow sidled up to Harry Clay. "Can you tell me," he asked, "if a train leaves Sydney to-night for Albury?" I live there and want to get back. Mr Clay told him to get somebody to ring up the inquiry office at the railway Station. The deadbeat said he didn't know how he could manage this. So Mr Clay undertook to do the

ringing-up for him. As the two of them walked to where there was a telephone, a hundred yards away, the old fellow explained that in his early days he had been on the stage. "So you must have reformed," said Mr Clay, "and taken to honest toil instead. I rather like that. It shows there's SOME good in you. The pity is that more on the stage don't do the same." Mr Clay left him in the street, went into a shop where there was a telephone, and returned a few minutes later with the information that no train left until 7.30 the following night. His newly-made friend was horror-stricken. "Whatever shall I do," he wailed, "to see me over till then?" I don't know a soul here and I haven't got a penny. By this time Mr Clay had taken a tumble. "It's all right, old fellow!" he said. "You've beaten me. If you haven't been an actor – as you say you have – you certainly should be one. You played the part well. Here's half a crown, if that's any good to you. You deserve it. Only" – by this time Mr Clay had got a good whiff of his breath – "before you nibble at anybody else take a clove or two to get rid of the smell of it. You'll have a much better chance of pulling it off, if you do." The old man pocketed the half crown, smiled in acknowledgment of the tip with which it was accompanied, and the two of them separated – Mr Clay to meet, a few minutes later, some friends to whom he laughingly related the incident. "It was," he declared, "the most artfully-worked thing I've struck for many a day" (TT: July 1915, 7).

- Arthur Morley sang "The Singer was Irish" at Harry Clay's last week. This so moved an old "Tad" in the front row of the stalls that he sent around "a small gift for the singer." It was bright sovereign. On being told that the song could not be sung again in the second half, the old fellow signified his intention of being present [the next week]. But here's where Harry Clay gets his dirty work. He is busy rehearsing all the Irish songs he can think of. "I'll be the first on the programme, too," declares Harry, "and see if I can hit the old fellow for a tenner" (AV: 11 Aug. 1915, 17).

- Those young fellows – Harry Clay and Arthur Morley – are always having a "go" at one another. The latter, coming off stage after his turn at the Bridge Theatre the other evening, said: "Say, Harry, the audience are so used to giving me money for my wonderful efforts that somebody just threw up sixpence on the stage." "That's right old man," was the rejoinder. "They'll throw more than that before the finish." "I can bear that," was Morley's reply. "I'm the best looking singer for my age in Australia." "Well spare me days," said the white-haired one. "You don't like yourself! Look at me – my beauty is not artificial. I need no grease paint to make me look pretty." The last squib was too much for Arthur, so he discreetly withdrew from the controversy (AV: 18 Aug. 1915, 12).

- Harry Clay was waiting on the side of the stage, looking rather anxious the other evening, during the farce. When asked what the matter was he replied that owing to him mislaying the stage money they were using his good notes: at the time there was a fair amount being used. It was no wonder that Harry was keeping an eye on them (AV: 8 Dec. 1915, n. pag.)

1916

- When Harry Clay walked in on the disappointed orator (who was airing his version of why he wouldn't go up north, and how much he was worth to Clay), there was something doing. And the bombastic one got what he deserved – his walking ticket (AV: 12 Jan. 1916, n. pag.).

- Harry Clay was recently presented with a framed photograph of the picnic group. Conductor, Percy Davis, on behalf of the committee, handed the gift over to the silvery-haired one, who responded in a cordial and appreciative speech. The good feeling existing between the genial Clay and his employees is most marked (AV: 12 Apr. 1916, 5).

- "You've had some good wins," was the remark of a friend to Harry Clay, respecting the latter's racecourse experiences. "Yes," Mr Clay replied, 'with becoming emphasis; "but they've had some better wins from me" (TT: Nov. 1916, 54).

1917

- Going back a few years, it is brought to mind that in those days Gio Angelo, then working for J. C. Bain, was receiving six pounds a week to work in [the] first and second part. When asked to double with Harry Clay's Newtown show at half salary, he readily agreed, but the Australian Variety Artists Association, then much more powerful than it is now, refused to let [him] work under full salary, and Mr Clay had to fall in with their views (AV: 23 May 1917, n. pag.).

- Jake Mack and Bert Le Blanc were both seen doubled up in Newtown last week, when an old lady came up and asked them what was the matter, and obtaining no answer was just about to call a cab and send them to hospital when Jake Mack said he was alright, but was only laughing. He had been listening to one of Harry Clay's funny stories (AV: 27 June 1917, 3).

- With Clay's ruling the roost at Newtown, the Fuller circuit decided to enter the competition. Fullers took over the majestic [later to become the Elizabethan] and the battle for audiences began. The night the Fullers opened found Clay's almost empty. Harry told Maurice [Chenoweth] to do something about it. On the Monday a full-page ad appeared in the Newtown Daily. All it said was: "From Clay you came, and to Clay you will return." The next day Fullers took over the Newtown Daily. Its ad read: "No matter how full you are, we're always Fuller" ("Audiences," NP: 23 Sept. 1917, n. pag.).

- Ben Fuller owned the favourite running in the Fourteen-two Handicap at Kensington on July 18. He failed to get a place. "The horse's bad showing was, indeed, the disappointment of the day. Among Ben's heaviest backers was – Harry Clay! But Harry got it all back – and a trifle more – by Agathon's nose-victory over Balanto in the next race (TT: Aug. 1917, n. pag.).

1918

- Said Harry Clay, approaching the hulking six-footer who outside the vestibule of the princess (Sydney) was cursing and threatening everybody within hearing, "You're a terrible fellow! You must have a graveyard of your own somewhere." The conflict that followed was quick and decisive. It wasn't until Mr Clay had picked him up and sat him on the footpath with his to a support that he partly recovered consciousness. His first words were: "Where's Jack?" Jack was a companion to who he had handed some fish he was eating as a preliminary to the easy job he thought he had before him. But Jack had vanished. Nor was it long before he was followed, sadly and sorely, by the man who a few minutes previously was going to eat the whole theatre (TT: Nov. 1918, 24).

1920

- Harry Clay, the proprietor of the Princess and the Newtown Bridge Theatres, says he is not frothing for it, but if Jack Munro put on an old Buffers' competition at the stadium, he will be a competitor, and believe me whoever beats Harry will know there has been a cyclone around somewhere. He can hit like a mule kicking (AV: 1 Apr. 1920, 3).
- Among his acquaintances Mr Clay still keeps up his reputation as a humorist. A performer whose weakness he knew was the other night humming in his hearing "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles." "Yes," interrupted Mr Clay; "blowing them from the top of a pewter" (TT: Sept. 1920, 3).

1921

- Early in 1920, with business booming, Harry Clay took a stroke. He was put to bed in his Petersham home. It was hard, with his tremendous vitality to stay in bed. He gave his coloured vocabulary full play. In desperation, he got up and went to the theatre. To one of the cast he said "You know I think it's time I got off this earth." The man was startled. "Why Mr Clay?" "Because" and Harry Clay emitted a stream of well-chosen adjectives – "when I walked past the news boy outside, I heard him say, 'there goes that old so-and-so Harry Clay.' Now I don't mind being called a so-and-so, but I'm damned if I like that 'old' business ("Audiences" NP: 23 Sept. 1951, n. pag.)

1923

- Mr Clay looked a very ill man as the writer, the other evening, passed him on his way into the princess. In progress at that moment was a burlesque of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Poor old Tom was expiring under the flagellations of the brutal, murderous Simon Legree. But Tom still had a grasp in him. "My body may belong to you, Massa;" he gurgled; "but my soul belongs to - Harry Clay!" Certainly there are thousands – and more than thousands – who must feel that, whatever their after-life may be, this indeed would have been an unhappy one except for - Harry Clay (TT: July 1923, 17).

APPENDIX K

HARRY CLAY: MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

NB: A regularly updated chronology of Clay's life and career can be accessed at the Australian Variety Theatre Archive.
See his entry at: <http://ozvta.com/entrepreneurs-a-f/> (or at Pandora <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-143747>)

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Much of the information in this appendix has been drawn from the primary sources located during the course of the research undertaken from the thesis. It is presented here primarily as an additional research aid. Many of the details have been included within the body of the thesis, although some extra information which relates to Clay, but not considered necessary to the thesis itself, has also been included.

NOTE: Within the "Chronology in Brief" section are addresses where Harry Clay and his family are thought to have resided each year. During the early years, when he was often known as Henry, there appear to be at least two people by the name of Henry Clay living in Sydney. As I have not yet been able to establish which one is the subject of this thesis I have included both addresses. Furthermore, it must be mentioned that the addresses given during this early period, even when only one is included, must be treated with caution, as I have been unable to prove beyond doubt that such abodes were in fact lived in by Clay. From 1907, however, when Clay and his family moved to Wigram Road (Glebe), his home addresses become much easier to establish.



From "Audiences Were Tough When Harry Clay Ran Vaudeville," n. pag.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Born: Henry Clay, 10 May 1865 at Patrick Plains, New South Wales (Reg. No. – 13458)

Family: Father: John Clay, born 1808 in London, England. Henry Clay's birth certificate records that his father was a dealer by profession and 57 years of age.

Mother: Mary Anne (nee Lord), born in 1833 at Windsor, New South Wales.

His parents married in Sydney on 27 October 1851.

Siblings:

Mary A.	1851 –
Ralph J.	1855 –
George	1858 or 1859 –
Sarah	1862-1867
Elizabeth	1869-1870

Married: Catherine (Kate) Jubb at Glebe in 1887.

Children: Essie, born at Glebe in 1888.

Died: 17 February 1925 at Watson's Bay, N.S.W.
Interred at South Head Cemetery (CEO section), along with Catherine and Essie.
Allotment No: 236.

-
- Clay is known to have used Walter as his middle name, although this is not recorded in his birth registration.
 - Charles Norman recalls that Clay was a solidly-built gentleman. In his early twenties he was also described in various advertisements as being "robust." Norman says further that Harry was noted to have been quite handy at throwing people out of his theatres, particularly drunks (Letter 1).
 - Norman's impression of Clay was that he was a placid type of man who got along well with most people. "He appealed to us when we first met him as a kind person," he records. It is feasible that Clay's character was reflected in the harmonious and family-type atmosphere of his company, as described by Thea Rowe-Hosking. Some of the most common descriptions are his geniality, generosity (particularly to people who found themselves in an unfortunate position) and his popularity among the general theatrical fraternity. This is further emphasised by the large turnout at his funeral.
 - The "Audiences were Tough when Harry Clay Ran Vaudeville" records:

Everyone one in Sydney knew Harry Clay. [He] was one of the greatest figures in the history of Australian vaudeville... Clay was an enigma. He neither smoked nor drank. He would not tolerate a "blue" joke in his theatres. His own lurid vocabulary, however, would have put a bullock driver to shame... Fans came from miles sometimes just to hear Harry Clay swear. he had no trouble in finding work, but he did have trouble with his employers. His strong personality did not take easily to direction. Though Clay gave the appearance of being tough with his actors, his quiet kindness often cost him money. Early in 1920, with business booming, Harry Clay took a stroke. He was put to bed in his Petersham home. It was hard, with his tremendous vitality to stay in bed. He gave his coloured vocabulary full play (n. pag.)
 - Harry Clay was a pretty good chucker-out himself. He often gave a demonstration of this from the stage of the Bridge Theatre (ARG: 3 July 1957, n. pag.)
 - Everyone's also records that Clay neither smoked nor drank, but, to his intimates, he possessed a vocabulary of Australian language seldom equalled, and which formed, in part, his ordinary form of conversation. "To many," noted the writer, "this would be considered an acquisition necessary to one in his position" (25 Feb. 1925, 4).

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

- Clay is known to have owned several pieces of real estate, some of these being in his wife's name. The properties that have been established as being owned by Clay are:
 - **218 Glebe Point Road, Glebe.** Purchased from the sons of George Wigram Allen, the original owner of much of early Glebe.
 - **11 Wigram Road, Glebe.** Known as "Zetland," Essie Clay resided there for many years prior to her death in 1948.
 - **Lot 9 Dampier Parade, Sutherland.** Purchased for £99 from Leonard Thomas Cooper of Manly on 26 January 1917.
 - **Lot 1 Princess Parade, Kurnell.** Purchased for £50.8.0 from Cooper (Princess Parade is now known as Prince Charles Parade).

Neither Lot 1 or Lot 9 were ever officially transferred from Cooper to Clay by the time of Clay's death in 1925. In a Statutory Declaration made by Catherine Clay following her husband's death, she declared that:

Henry Clay purchased from Thomas Cooper of Manly, Gentleman, now deceased through his agents Messrs. Horning and Company, Lots 1 and 9 of the Captain Cook Estate Sutherland for the prices of £99 and £50.8.0 respectively. No transfer of the said lots was ever executed. To the best of my knowledge and belief the said Henry Clay sold Lot 1 of the said land to A.R. Abbott in 1921 and I am informed by Mr Abbott and verily I believe that the purchase money therefore has long since been paid and nothing remained owing on the said Lot to the said Henry Clay at the time of his death. No written contract for the sale of the said land Lot 1 to A.R. Abbott was ever executed.

- Interestingly Catherine Clay claimed in another Statutory Declaration made out in 1953 that she had recently become aware of "an additional asset" in her husband's estate – this being Lot 1, the piece of real estate said to have been purchased by Abbott in 1921. Catherine Clay requested that the property be included in Harry Clay's estate. There are no further details regarding this issue or its outcome.
- Clay's Deceased Estate File shows that he died with £39.0.9 (with £69.13.0 accrued interest) in the bank. A £500 (with £22.10.0 accrued interest) fixed term account, also in his name, was claimed by Essie Clay as her trust fund, which Clay started in 1905. The file also records that Clay died with no possessions other than "worn and valueless clothing." He also held 2532 ordinary shares (valued at 20/0) in Clay's Bridge Theatre Ltd at the time of his death, with no preference shares.
- A comic singer [Clay] was known, too, for his renditions of "Underneath the Maple" and "Essie Dear," both of which he performed for more than 25 years. He was the first person in Sydney to sing "White Wings" and the first person heard anywhere to sing "Sister," a march song written by Allan Rattray which was later to become the rage of America. Other favourite songs of his were: "Thou Art So Near," "When the Robins Nest Again" and "Sadie Ray." He sang these songs almost continuously for 10 years.

Clay estimates that he had been in front of the public as a singer for some thirty years. He was associated with many of the old time minstrel performers, including W. Horace bent, Sam Keenan, Alf Moynham, Alf Lawton, Beaumont Read, Jack Porter, Lou Brahm and T. Amery. All eight were at one time members of Hiscocks' Federal Minstrels (TT: Sept. 1914, 25).

- Clay appeared for approximately 18 months with Frank Smith at the Alhambra (Sydney), where he modestly confessed "I was a hell of a favourite in those days." In his early twenties he managed a company known as the "Australian Eleven" (as it comprised that number of Australian performers), including himself. He acted as interlocutor and sang tenor solos. A writer for Everyone's remembered the first few appearances of the combination, writing:

Harry would come before the footlights (gas in those days) and make an announcement to the effect that he would like the audience to 'give the show a chance, as they were all Australians and desired to prove that they could do as well as many of those who came from other countries... Later on he became a member of Dan Tracey's All-Star vaudeville Company, followed by a period of time at the School of Arts, Sydney, where he achieved a certain amount of distinction for his rendition of "Elsie of the Glen" and other prominent tenor songs. For the next seven or eight years he was a contemporary with the best-known vaudeville performers of the Australian stage, after which he began running his own business at St George's hall, Newtown, shortly followed by tours of Queensland... (E: 25 Feb. 1915, 4).

- At the funeral a large and representative gathering was present. In fact, it can be safely said that no more fitting tribute to a deceased manager has ever been noted in this country, for old-timers, and those of today gathered round the graveside to pay their last respects to one who had done so much to promote the well-being of the Australian performer (E: 25 Feb. 1925, 4).
- After a number of years of inconsistent work, and with disagreements with management he got together a few small acts and began Clay's circuit around the Sydney suburbs. His main theatre was St George's Hall, King St., Newtown. Backed by Harold T. Morgan and Archibald R. Abbott, Clay bought out an old blacksmith's shop and built his famous theatre at Newtown Bridge... As business grew so did his holdings. He went into the Princess Theatre near Central Railway, the Gaiety Theatre in Oxford Street, and the Coliseum [now the Independent] at North Sydney. Clay also ran two country circuits, north in the Newcastle area and south around Wollongong (TP: 23 Sept. 1951, n. pag.).
- Clay's theatres did not long survive their founder. When the new fangled talkies hit Sydney, legitimate theatre folded up practically overnight. Clay's crumbled. Some of the houses were converted to picture houses. Others were pulled down (ARG: 3 July 1957, n. pag.).

CRONOLOGY IN BRIEF

1865

- Born at Patrick Plains, New South Wales, on 10 May 1865.
- Patrick Plains: Situated in the county of Northumberland, NSW, on the south bank of the River Hunter, in the Parish of Whittingham, distance from Sydney 120 miles. Here is the town of Singleton. The Police district of Patrick Plains contained in 1848, 2983 inhabitants and 467 houses (Singleton 127 houses and 565 inhabitants). The district extended:

North to the Fallbrook Range
West to the Sandy Creek Range and Muswellbrook
South/West to Jerry's Plains and Wambo Range
South to Wollombi Brook and Brokenback Mountain
South/East to the Hunter River
East to Brokenback Mountain, and from Black Creek to the Hunter River

Map reference: 150 degrees, 40 minutes to 151 degrees, 10 minutes longitude; 33 degrees to 32 degrees latitude.

[Source: William Henry Wells. *A Geographical Dictionary or Gazette of the Australian Colonies*, 1848]

ca. 1872

- Moved to Newcastle with his family circa 1872 (aged 6-7), spending most of his early life in the city. By age eight, Clay had two delivery vans – not boxes drawn by billygoats – but proper carts and horses, one of which he worked, with the other being work by a man he employed. During his childhood he also sang in churches.

ca. 1883

- By eighteen Clay had begun an apprenticeship as a plasterer, a trade he continued at for some eighteen months. During this period he was also appearing on the amateur stage playing in farces and performing as a singer. One of the amateur societies he performed with was The Great Northern variety Company, a group he was prominently identified with.

ca. 1884

- At age nineteen he gave up plastering and took to the stage professionally. His debut was with a little show organised to go down the Northern rivers. Other members of the company included Harry Kelly and Jack Huntsdale. The Theatre indicates that the tour "paid its way."

1885

- 4 Oct.: Begins his engagement with Frank Smith at the Sir Joseph Banks Pavilion and Pleasure Grounds, Botany as part of a Grand Sacred and Classical Concert. He performs "Thou Art So Near and Yet So Far" and is 14th on the programme (of 16 acts).
- 10 Oct.: First engagement with Frank Smith's Alhambra Variety Company at the Alhambra Music Hall. He again performs "Thou Art So Near and Yet So Far."

1886

- Continues engagement with Frank Smith, performing at both the Sir Joseph Banks Pavilion and Pleasure Grounds and the Alhambra (ca. Jan.-June). Advertising does not include Clay's name for the period 9 January to 27 March.
- May 22: Clay's first known public performance of "Essie Dear" at the Alhambra. The song had previously been sung on the Smith circuit by Behn Hendrix.
- May 29: Clay's first known public performance of "White Wings" at the Grand Concert Spiritual, Alhambra Music Hall.
- Aug. 7-21: Clay performs two songs during the three Grand Classical Concerts (Sunday shows) at the Theatre Royal, Sydney.

1887

- Residence: Henry Clay, 165 Goulban Street (rented under the name Henry Clay).
- Marries Catherine Jubb in Glebe during the year.
- After a country tour he and some other members of the troupe, including George Turner, took on the lease of the Sydney Music Hall in the Haymarket (Sydney) [Harry Rickards followed their season with his English Co.]. After this Clay was involved with the London Pavilion Company at the Old Opera House (Syd) before "skirmishing" in the county with different companies.
- Oct. 8: Last known engagement with Frank Smith for the Alhambra Grand Sacred Concerts and Sir Joseph Banks Pavilion and Pleasure Grounds. Advertisements for Clay stop from 29 October.
- Nov. 19: Engagement at the Bondi Aquarium for its Grand Sacred Concerts.

1888

- Residence: 3 Ebenezer Street / 11 Pine Street (rented under the name Henry Clay).
- Essie Clay born during the year.
- Feb. 11: Engaged by Walsh and King for their Saturday night minstrel shows at the Protestant Hall.
- Apr. 28: Clay again advertised as appearing on the bill of the People's Popular Concerts (Protestant Hall, Syd).
- Nov. 17: Re-engaged for the People's Popular Concerts (R. Marshall is now manager). Clay's engagement continues into early/mid December.
- Dec. 22: Engaged to play the manly Aquarium

1889

- Residence: 3 Ebenezer Street / 48 Talfourd Street (rented under the name Henry Clay).
- Mar. 16: The Federal Minstrels (no relationship with Hiscocks' Federal Minstrels) open at the New Haymarket, Sydney with Clay in the company. Lessee, H. Florak.
- Apr. 20: Premiere production of the Federal Minstrels' black burlesque of H.M.S. Pinafore (by arrangement with Williamson, Garner and Musgrove). Clay plays Chafed Haystack.
- May 27: Last advertisement and mention in the Sydney Morning Herald for the Federal Minstrels.
- Aug. 17: One week season with W.J. Wilson's Anglo-American Frolics (comprised English, American and Australian artists) (Academy of Music, Syd).
- Aug. 24: "First appearance of the Silvery Tenor, Mr Harry Clay" for the Great Faust-Perman Combination (Haymarket Music Hall, Syd). Lessee and Director, E. Faust; S Mngr. Martyn Hagen; B Mngr. James Morgan.
- Aug. 31: Performs at a Grand Complimentary Benefit Concert, tendered by the musical profession of Sydney to Herr Von Der Mehdren, "the Great Cornet Soloist," (Her Majesty's Theatre, Syd).
- Oct. 5: Appears in the Grand Opening Night of Hiscocks London Pavilion Company (Opera House, Syd).
- Nov. 2: Performs "The Cruiskeen Lawn" in a double quartet with John Fuller, J.V. Doran, W. H. Harrison, Beaumont Reade, J. Whitworth, George Turner and a Mr Smyth.

1890

- Residence: 126 Broughton Street / 48 Talfourd Street (rented under the name Henry Clay).
- Jan. 16: A "re-engagement" with George Barr at the Haymarket Theatre for two nights only. The short season sandwiched between the closure of the 20 American Coloured Performers and the opening of the Dramatic and Burlesque Company's Sweeney Todd, The Barber.
- Nov. 8: The Federal Minstrel Company perform at the Bondi Aquarium (Sat and Sun).
- Nov. 15: Re-engagement of the Federal Minstrel Company at the Bondi Aquarium. Clay is again a troupe member.

1891

- Residence: No details.
- May 30: Clay's first night at the School of Arts (Syd) with Dan Tracey's Vaudeville Minstrel and Specialty Company.

1892

- Residence: 2 Little Darling Street, Glebe - rented under the name Henry Clay.
- Continues with Dan Tracey at the School of Arts.
- Feb. 13: Dan Tracey begins operations at Melbourne's Gaiety Theatre. Clay is engaged for a season, starting with the opening night. Advertising suggests that this is his first appearance in the city. He is billed as the "robust tenor" and sings "Dear Little Jessie."
- May 7: A Sydney Morning Herald advertisement notes the return of "the Favourite Tenor, Harry Clay to Dan Tracey's School of Arts" Sydney (2).
- Aug. 1: Clay is the headline act for the bill presented by Dan Tracey at his first show at the Gaiety Theatre (Syd). The company moved there from the School of Arts. A Sydney Morning Herald review notes that "the tenor solo of Mr Harry Clay [was] received with enthusiasm" (2).

1893

- Residence: 2 Little Darling Street, Glebe - rented under the name Henry Clay.
- Jan - Feb.: Engaged as a tenor and stage manager with Walshe's Novelty Company for their Brisbane season at the Gaiety Theatre, opening 28 January. The company, owned and operated by Ralph Walshe, includes his wife and Alf Lawton. The intended four week season closes after only one week due to the Brisbane flood.

1894

- Residence: 113 Broughton Street, Glebe - rented under the name Henry Clay.
- Clay is believed to have begun managing St George's Hall, Newtown, sometime around 1894/95. This association possibly continued for around three to four years.

1895

- Residence: 113 Broughton Street, Glebe (rented under the name Henry Clay).

1896

- Residence: 39 Broughton Street, Glebe (rented under the name Henry Clay).

1897

- Residence: 23 Denman Street, Glebe (rented under the name Henry Clay).

1898

- Residence: 14 Phillip Street, Glebe - rented under the name Henry Clay.
- Sept-Dec.: Harry, Kate and Essie are engaged by J.L. Travers to tour Queensland with his Continental Vaudeville Company.

1899

- Residence: 14 Phillip Street, Glebe - rented under the name Henry Clay.

1900

- Residence: 14 Phillip Street, Glebe - rented under the name Henry Clay.
- Harry, Kate and Essie are engaged by Walter Bell to tour Queensland with his Waxworks, Boer War and London Vaudeville Company.

1901

- Residence: 14 Phillip Street, Glebe - rented under the name Henry Clay.
- Mar-Aug.: Clay undertakes the first NSW/Queensland tour with his Waxworks and Vaudeville Company. The tour includes his wife and daughter.
- The company is also believed to have toured Tasmania and Victoria between 1901 and 1902.

1902

- Residence: 22 Henderson Rd, Alexandria - rented under the name Henry Clay.
- Mar-Aug.: Tours Queensland with his Waxworks and Vaudeville Co.

1903

- Residence: 22 Henderson Rd, Alexandria - rented under the name Henry Clay.
- Feb-July: Tours Queensland with his Waxworks and Vaudeville Co.
- Clay is believed to have begun operating his Sydney suburban circuit sometime after the end of the Queensland tour.

1904

- Residence: Wentworth Park Rd, Glebe - rented under the name Henry Clay.
- Tours Queensland with his Waxworks and Vaudeville Co and continues to operate his Sydney suburban circuit during the non-tour period (approx Sept.-Feb.)

1905

- Residence: Wentworth Park Rd, Glebe - rented under the name Henry Clay.
NB: A Mrs C. Clay is also recorded as living at 22 Henderson Rd, Alexandria (no explanation for this has yet been found).
- Mar-Aug: Tours Queensland with his Waxworks and Vaudeville Co and continues to operate his Sydney suburban circuit during the non-tour period (approx Sept.-Feb.)
- Aug.: Opens a trust account for Essie (in his name) at the Post Office Bank (Martin Place) with £300.

1906

- No residential details located.
- Sends another company on tour through Queensland but does not accompany it.

1907

- Residence: 25 Wigram Road, Glebe.
- 7th annual Queensland tour. Clay again remains in Sydney.

1908

- Residence: 25 Wigram Road, Glebe.
- Oct-Nov. Clay tours Queensland as manager and occasional singer with his Dramatic Company. Essie Clay is the principal actress.
- 8th annual Queensland tour. Clay remains in Sydney.
- Purchases 218 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, in September for £1,500 in Catherine's name.

1909

- Residence: 218 Glebe Point Road, Glebe.
- July-Sept. Sends Walter Bentley Dramatic Co., through Queensland (Essie Clay as female principal).
- The Theatre compares Clay's position in the suburbs with that of the Tivoli in the city, noting that it is "quite an accepted institution" (Sept. 1909, 18).

1910

- Residence: 218 Glebe Point Road, Glebe.
- June 30: Joins his Queensland tour at Rockhampton
- Aug. 20: Resumes his city and suburban circuit, opening at the Royal Standard (aka Clay's Standard). He also returns to the stage after a lengthy spell concentrating on his managerial operations.

1911

- Residence: 218 Glebe Point Road, Glebe.
- Mar-Aug.: Tours NSW and Queensland with his Comedy Company.
- ca. July-Oct. Clay acts as producer for Stanley McKay's pantomime company on its tour of Queensland. The productions include Bo-Peep, The Carnival of Girls and The Circus Queen. Jimmy Boyle is Business Mngr and Walter V. Hobbs is Tour Mngr. The performances are held in a huge mining tent, which seats over 2,000 people.

1912

- Residence: 218 Glebe Point Road, Glebe.
- "Backed by Harold T. Morgan and Archibald R. Abbott, Clay [buys] out an old blacksmith's shop and builds his famous theatre at Newtown Bridge" (NP: 23 Sept. 1951, n. pag.)
- With Morgan and Abbott Clay also forms Clay's Bridge Theatre Company. It builds and eventually controls the Bridge Theatre, as well as the Gaiety and Princess theatres in Sydney.
- Mar-Aug.: Tours Queensland with his Comedy Company.

1913

- Residence: 218 Glebe Point Road, Glebe.
- Accompanies the Queensland tour only as far as Bathurst on the NSW leg (22 Feb.). He then returns to Sydney to oversee the construction of the Bridge Theatre.
- Apr.: Begins managing the Balmain Theatre.
- July: Bridge Theatre is granted its license (possibly opened July or August).
- Dec.: Clay closes down his suburban circuit except for the Coronation Theatre (Leichhardt) in order to concentrate on the Bridge Theatre operations.

1914

- No residential details located.
- Clay is included in Australian Variety's "Can You Imagine," over several issues. These are "Can You Imagine": "Harry Clay as a boxer" (19 Aug.); "Harry Clay, Percy Dix and Jimmy Bain together on one weighing machine" (26 Aug.); and "fighting with Germans" (9 Sept.).

1915

- Residence: 29 Wigram Road, Glebe.
- Clay performs regularly at the Bridge Theatre during the year.
- Jan.: Appears as an Admiral in the first part "Fun on Board the S.S. Newtown."
- July 15: Assists the Australia Day movement with a benefit at the Bridge Theatre. The proceeds (£91) are donated to the Red Cross Fund. Harry performs a duet with Mark Erickson (AV: 14 July 1915, 9; 21 July 1915, 4).
- Sept. 29: Clay states in Australian Variety that only he is authorized to book artists for the Bridge Theatre, and that no one else has any influence in booking acts. Artists with vacant dates must see him personally, when their work will be judged on its merits (AV: 29 Sept. 1915, 12).

1916

- Residence: 29 Wigram Road, Glebe.
- By the end of the year Clay is operating four companies. The NSW southwest circuit includes Goulburn, Murrumburrah, Wagga Wagga, Young, Cowra, Grenfell, Bathurst, Lithgow, Portland, Albury, Harden, Katoomba, and Yass.
- The Sydney city/suburban circuit incl. Mascot, North Sydney, Parramatta, Ashfield, Auburn, Newtown, Bondi Junction, Mosman, Balmain and Manly.
- May: Clay announces that the Bridge Theatre is to be given £5,000 worth of improvements in the near future (AV: 10 May 1916, n. pag.).
- Aug.: Clay engages James H. White to act as manager of his newly established theatrical agency – Harry Clay's Vaudeville Enterprises. The business' office is located at 4 Young's Chambers at the corner of Pitt and Park streets. White had previously acted in a similar capacity out of the offices of Australian Variety.
- Oct.: Clay is recorded by Australian Variety as having recently purchased "a valuable piece of land in close proximity to the Rozelle Post-Office." The magazine goes on to note that "arrangements are being made to go on with a building without delay. On completion it will be the most up-to-date theatre in the suburbs..." (4 Oct. 1916, n. pag.).
- Nov.: "[Harry] Clay is now binding artists under contract, a move that has become necessary owing to the great demands on some artists services" (AV: 1 Nov. 1916, n. pag.).
- Nov.: Australian Variety notes that "Harry Clay's new theatre, which is being built at Balmain, will be a most up-to-date house [and is being] furnished with all the latest appointments" It is unclear if this is the same theatre earlier mentioned as being in Rozelle (8 Nov. 1916, n. pag.).

- Nov.: Australian Variety also records "Mr Clay puposes [sic] extending operations to Victoria, where there is undoubtedly a big opening for a vaudeville circuit, run on similar lines to the NSW venture (8 Nov. 1916, n. pag.).

1917

- Residence: 29 Wigram Road, Glebe.
- Jan. 26: Purchases from Thomas Cooper of Manly Lot 9, Dampier Parade, Sutherland for £99 and Lot 1, Princess Parade, Kurnell for £50.8.0.
- Clay is still operating four separate companies around his Sydney/NSW circuits. The South-west circuit lasted a fortnight (and hence required two companies to service the towns. The other two companies serviced the weekly suburban circuit. A fifth company also undertook the Queensland tour between ca. March and August.
- Clay's Vaudeville Agency (located at 256 Pitt St) is advertised in Sand's Sydney Directory.
- June 2: Fullers go head to head with Clay by opening their Majestic Theatre – almost diagonally opposite the Bridge Theatre.

1918

- Residence: 23 Wigram Road, Glebe.
- Jan.: Clay is recorded as visiting Melbourne with a view to possibly opening up a circuit there in the near future. *Australian Variety* notes that he wants to link the Victorian capital with his Sydney operations, and intends opening there in early 1918. (14 Dec. 1917, 3). This venture is likely delayed when Clay is offered the lease of the Princess Theatre and then cancelled altogether following the outbreak of the Spanish Flu pandemic later in the year.
- Jan.: Clay becomes the new President of the Newtown Keystone Glee Club following the resignation of Bluey Anderson Due to business pressures (AV: 1 Feb. 1918, 20).
- Mar. 23: Clay takes over the lease of the Princess Theatre in the city.
- James Caldwell and Ern Crawford perform "When the Leaves Came Drifting Down" (a duet reportedly written by Clay).

1919

- Residence: 23 Wigram Road, Glebe.
- May: Clay reopens Sydney suburban circuit and Bridge Theatre after enforced closure due to the flu epidemic.
- ca. July: He holds a competition in which people are invited to respond to the phrase "I still would love you..." Australian Variety records that he received over 1,000 letters. One example of the kind of responses includes: "If off Frank Herberte you bought a fur, or did a trial for Andy Kerr, I would still love you."
- Nov.: Clay begins his "official" association with the Gaiety Theatre (Oxford Street), providing the entertainment there despite having done so unofficially since at least May. Andy Kerr remains the lessee/theatre manager.

1920

- Residence: Marine Parade, Vaucluse.
- June: Australian Variety notes that Clay is "in position of being in Easy Street for the rest of his life [and that] his Watson's Bay tenants presented him with an address the other day, which was much appreciated" (18 June 1920, 7).
- Oct.: Clay is recorded as owning a block of land next to the Post Office in Rozelle. It is also indicated that he intends using it for theatrical purposes.

1921

- Residence: 14 Salisbury Street, Camperdown.
- A.R. Abbott claims in 1925 (see Clay's Deceased Estate File) that Harry sold him Lot 1, Princess Parade, Sutherland during the year. No written contract was ever made out, however.

- Mar.: Everyone's records that Clay, "whose great hobby is racehorses, has changed his team from Kogarah to Kensington" and that he has recently "bought a couple of fine yearlings" which he put "under the watchful eye of Trainer Arthur, the old-time ventriloquist [and] who now turns out a good many winners" (30 Mar. 1921, 20).
- Clay has a stroke sometime between April and July. He subsequently spends a lengthy period in hospital followed by another lengthy spell at home recovering.
- Aug.: Clay who "had been in very poor shape up to a week ago" is gradually improving (E: 31 Aug. 1921, 20).
- Sept.: Everyone's further records Clay "is now back at his home where his convalescence is very gradual" and that "he will take things easy for some time yet" (14 Sept. 1921, 20).
- Dec.: Clay is reportedly up and about but still required to take things easy. "The well-known Australian manager," records Everyone's "had a close call some little time ago, and is lucky to be about again. He is, we are pleased to say, getting stronger every day (28 Dec. 1921, n. pag.).

1922

- Residence: Audley St, Petersham.
- Jan.: "Now on the semi-sick list for over six months, genial Harry Clay... is beginning to be something like his old self again. He has been taking things very quietly, although still doing a little bit here and there, and will, in all probability, be back at his post at the Princess Theatre within the next week or so" (E: 11 Jan. 1922, 19).
- Mar/Apr.: Clay takes over control of both the Betts-Portus vaudeville contracts and Ike Beck Newcastle/Hunter circuit (TT: Mar. 1922, 24).

1923

- No residential details located. Catherine Clay is recorded as living at 6 Soudan St, Paddington.
- Feb.: Clay is awarded the verdict as defendant in an action brought about his Francis Rose Phillips (Fanny Levarto).
- May: The Theatre notes that in health Harry Clay "is still far from being his old accustomed self."
- June: This time the Theatre reports that Clay "looked a very ill man... on his way to the Princess Theatre."

1924

- No residential details located.
- The "Audiences Were Tough" article notes that Clay moved into a small flat in Watsons Bay. "Artists and fans at the theatres never saw him again" (n. pag.).
- Nov.: Clay's longtime friend and manager Jimmy Boyle dies suddenly in Sydney.

1925

- Two addresses identified – Henry Clay, 29 Wigram Rd, Glebe (possibly Essie's address) and Vauclose Flats, Watson's Bay.
- Feb. 17: Dies aged 60 at his Watson's Bay residence. The "Audiences Were Tough" article records that he passed away "with just a few friends about him." Following his funeral, attended by a very large number of people, including Bert Bailey, Ben Fuller, and the Newtown Mayor among others, he was interred at South Head Cemetery (CEO). Everyone's suggested that his funeral "probably saw more Australian performers congregated together than at any other period in the history of the business" (25 Feb. 1925, 32).
- Clay's epitaph reads: "In Ever Loving Memory of My Dear Husband and My Dear father Harry Clay. Died 17th February 1925, Thy will be Done."

SONGS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN PERFORMED OR WRITTEN BY HARRY CLAY

Dates in brackets indicate the first known performance. All other dates indicate other years the song was known to have been performed.
[IS] = Illustrated Song

- "**All's Well**" (1998) A duet with Wally Edwards
 "**Annie Laurie**" (1914) A duet with Maurice Chenoweth
- "**Baby Boy Has Passed Away**" (1886)
 "**Beloved Eyes**" (1886)
 "**Blue Eyed Irish Boy, A**" (1898) 1900
 "**Bonnie Mary of Argyle**" (1902)
 "**Boys in Brown, The**" (1912)
 "**Bring Back the Old Folks**" (1893)
 "**Britain's Tribute to Her Sons**" (1905) Lyrics by Harry Clay
- "**Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming**" (1886) A quintet with Arthur Farley, Harry Barrington, Johnny Matlock and W. Wesley.
 "**Cruiskeen Lawn, The**" (1889) Performed as a double quartet with Hiscocks' London Pavilion Co.
- "**Darling I am Growing Old**" (1915)
 "**Dear Old Fairyland**" (1905)
 "**Dear Little Jessie**" (1885) 1892. While the song is also known to have been sung by others, notably W. Wesley, it was mostly associated with Clay in Australia. First sung by him at the Sir Joseph Banks Pavilion, Botany under the management of Frank Smith.
 "**Don't Be Crying Little Girl**" (1886)
 "**Down on the Farm**" (1904) 1905 [IS]
- "**Elsie of the Glen**" (ca. 1890s) Written by H.W. Porter.
 "**English Speaking Race Against the World, The**" (1900) 1901, 1904
 "**Essie Dear**" (1886) Written by ? Blamhett. Another song mostly associated with Clay in Australia, it is believed to have been first sung by him at the Alhambra Music Hall, Sydney on 22 May 1886. He went on to perform it for more than 25 years. The song is also known to have been sung by Behn Hendrix in Nov. 1885 at the Alhambra (during the same period Clay was there). Johnny Matlock also performed in ca. 1890.
- "**For Love and Victory**" (1904)
- "**Gallants of England**" (1912)
 "**Gypsies, The**" (1886). A trio performed by Clay, Harry Barrington and Arthur Farley.
- "**Happy Dreamland**" (1885) 1886
 "**He Carved His Mother's Name Upon the Tree**" (1903) [IS]
 "**He'll Return to Me**" (1886)
 "**He's Coming O'er the Sea**" (1886)
- "**I Am Your King**" (1886) A trio with Harry Barrington and Arthur Farley
 "**If a Star Would a Flower**" (1905) [IS]
 "**I'm a Pirate**" (1905)
 "**I'm Wearing My Heart Out for You**" (1904)
 "**In the House of Too Much Trouble**" (1904)
 "**Ireland's Rights**" (1901) 1908 Sung in 1908 as part of *The Irishman* (Clay's Dramatic Company tour of Queensland)
 "**Jack Crawford**" (1914) A duet with Maurice Chenoweth.
 "**Jack Tar**" (1914) [IS]
 "**Just to Live in Your Eyes**" (1912)
- "**Killarney**" (1903)
- "**Leave Me Not in Anger**" (1885) 1886
 "**Lo, My Courage**" (1904)
 "**Maggie Darrow**" (1886)

"Mama Where is Baby Gone" (1885) 1886
"Many Happy Returns of the Day" (1901)
"March of the Cameron Men" (1901)
"Meet Me at Twilight" (1887) Also known as "Meet Me at Midnight"
"Molly Doolan" (1912)
"Molly Mavoureen" (1885) 1886
"Motherland" (1902)
"Mountain's Fairest Flower" (1904) [IS]

"Old Log Cabin" (1892)
"Old Rustic Bridge" (1887)
"Only a Dear Little Flower" (1885)

"Pilot Brave" (1892) A duet with Charles Hudson.

"Ring Down the Curtain" (1903) 1904 [IS]

"Sally in the Alley" (1900)
"Sadie Ray" (n/e) Clay reportedly sang this for over ten years. It is known to have been performed in 1891 by S. Henderson.
"Sing Me That Pensive Air" (1885)
"Sister" (n/e)
"Soft are Her Slumbers" (1886) Performed as a quintet – Clay, Johnny Matlock, Arthur Farley, Harry Barrington and W. Wesley
"Soldiers Dream of Home, A" (1886)
"Soldier's Love, A" (1899) Performed as a double quartet by Hiscocks' Federal Minstrels
"Spring's Delight" (1889) Performed as a vocal quartet with Harry Carroll, Harry Craig and Arthur Farley.
"Sweet Bessie" (1887) 1889
"Sweet Dreams Be Thine" (1885) 1886

"Thou Art So Near and Yet So Far" (1885) Another song performed by Clay for more than 10 years.

"Unto Us a Child is Born" (1886) Performed as a quartet with Johnny Matlock, Arthur Farley and Amy Rowe.

"Volunteer Organist" (1902) [IS]

"Waiting in the Wild Woods" (1887)
"We Stood at the Alter of Friendship" (1905) [IS]
"When the Birds and the Blossoms Dream" (1887)
"When the Corn is Waiving, Annie Dear" (1886)
"When the Leaves Came Drifting Down" (1918) A duet written by Harry Clay and first performed by James Caldwell and Ern Crawford
"When the Robins Nest Again" (1885) Performed for over 10 years
"When the Vesper Bells are Ringing" (1905) [IS]
"When We Were Boys Together" (1905) [IS]
"While Sydney is Fast Asleep" (1912) [IS]
"White White Rose" (1901)
"White Wings" (1886) Although reportedly first sung in Australia by Percy Shannon in October 1887, Clay is known to have performed it the previous year (21 Aug.). Described as a "pretty baritone or mezzo-soprano song," White Wings was also included in W.H. Paling and Co's 1887 Christmas Annual in order to capitalise on its inclusion in the Williamson, Garner and Musgrove pantomime Robinson Crusoe (Theatre Royal, Sydney).

APPENDIX L

CATHERINE "KATE" CLAY

NB: An updated biography of Kate Clay can be accessed at the Australian Variety Theatre Archive.
See: <http://ozvta.com/practitioners-c/> (or at Pandora <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-143747>)

Born: Catherine Jubb at Glebe (Sydney) on 28 June 1869

Family: Father: Thomas Jubb
Mother: Mary A. Jubb

Siblings: William J. 1872 -
Thomas 1874 -
Florence 1876 -
Penelope 1881 -
Elizabeth 1888 -

Married: Harry Clay at Glebe in 1887.

Children: Essie, born at Glebe in 1888.

Died: 9 January in Sydney
Interred at South Head Cemetery (CEO section), along with Catherine and Essie. Allotment No: 236.

As mentioned in the thesis, there is very little yet known about Catherine Clay's life and stage career. She is only known to have performed, as a soubrette, with the minstrel troupes that Harry Clay was involved with between 1893 and 1905. During this period she toured Queensland with both Harry and Essie, using either the names Kate Henry or Kate Clay. While reviews of her performances do not hold much information concerning her talents or reception with audiences, it seems that she was a reasonably good contralto singer and played her parts in the farces effectively.

Some matters pertaining to her ownership of property and legal matters have been located. These include:

- Catherine was named as the owner of the property at 218 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, purchased in 1908. The residence stayed in her name until 1943 when it was sold to Jane O'Grady. At this time Catherine owed Harold T. Morgan (the Mortgagor) £1,934. It does not appear that she lived at the residence then, as the house was likely rented out for quite a number of years. Interestingly, the lessees of the property were all women.
- It is believed that Catherine at some stage was also named as the owner of a property at Watson's Bay known as "Vaucluse Flats." This was sometime around the early to mid-1920s, and possibly the residence where her husband died. Catherine's Statutory Declaration in Harry's Deceased Estate File (dated 19 May 1925) states in part:

The said deceased had no furniture or personal effects other than worn and useless clothing. At the time of his death he was residing with me in a flat. The furniture in the said flat was entirely my own property having been purchased and paid for by me many years ago out of moneys earned by me as an actress and theatrical artists (File No: 20/1021 No 11278)

- In the same Deceased Estate File, another Statutory Declaration (dated 20 Aug. 1953), Catherine also declared that she had only recently become aware of an additional asset in her late husband's estate, being Lot 1 Princess Parade, Kurnell.

CRONOLOGY IN BRIEF

1893

- Toured with her husband in Walshe's Novelty Company as a singer. She also participated in the farces. One of the songs she performed was "Will You Ever Think of Me?." Catherine also played the part of Mrs Souderwatta in the farce "The Foiled Mashers."

1898

- Engaged, along with Harry and Essie, to tour Queensland with J. L. Travers' Continental Vaudeville Company. Billed as Kate Henry she sings such songs as "Never Change Old Friends" and "Venus."

1901

- Tours New South Wales, Queensland (and possibly Victoria and Tasmania) with Harry and Essie. Songs performed on tour include: "A Picture of My Best Friend" and "Sweet Tennessee."

1903

- Tours New South Wales and Queensland with Harry. Songs performed include: "Not There" and "The Moth and the Flame."

1904

- Tours New South Wales and Queensland with Harry. Songs performed include: "Little Stars are Peeping." Played the lead role in the farce "The Chinese Question."

1905

- Tours New South Wales and Queensland with Harry and Essie. Songs performed include: "Carrie," "I Love My Love," and "Pretty Mary Green." Undertakes roles in all the farces.

1905

- Residing at 29 Wigram Road, Glebe. After the death of her daughter Essie, Catherine is left an annuity of £2 per week, with four additional sums of £3 each, making a total of £116 per year by her daughter. She also claimed the estate owed her £278.7.9 mostly for money borrowed by Essie in order to have repairs done to her house.

1965

- Catherine Clay passed away on 9 January in Sydney.

SONGS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN PERFORMED BY KATE CLAY

Dates in brackets indicate the first known performance. All other dates indicate other years the song was known to have been performed.

"Carrie" (1905)

"I Love My Love" (1905)

"Moth and the Flame, The" (1903)

"Never Change Old Friends" (1898)

"Not There" (1903)

"Picture of My Best Friend, A" (1898)

"Pretty Mary Green" (1905)

"Sweet Tennessee" (1898) 1901

"Venus" (1898)

"Will You Ever Think of Me?" (1893) Ballad

APPENDIX M

ESSIE CLAY

NB: An updated biography of Essie Clay can be accessed at the Australian Variety Theatre Archive.
See: <http://ozvta.com/practitioners-c/> (or at Pandora <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-143747>)

Born: Glebe, 1888

Died: 9 January in Sydney

Interred at South Head Cemetery (CEO section), along with her parents.
Allotment No: 236.

- Named after the song "Essie Dear," which her father first began singing while an emerging professional variety entertainer.
- Essie died a spinster. Her last will and testament indicates that she may well have died with much bitterness, with this appearing to have been directed towards her mother. Her deceased estate file shows that she died with a considerable amount of money, amounting to £2,016. This included the property at 11 Wigram Rod Glebe (known as "Zetland"), which was valued at £850, and shares in her father's company worth £696. She also had £782 in the bank. Appointing Harold Eric Morgan and Alfred Thomas Morgan as her legal representatives she decreed that after her debts were paid out that the rest of the money was to be given to the Church of England Homes, Carlingford and Wahroonga. She also left an annuity of £2 per week to her mother, plus an additional £3 each quarter (making a total of £116 per year).

Most interesting was her statement regarding her house, which she wanted "demolished as soon as may be possible after [her] death." The statement went on to further request: "The materials [are] to be sold and the land upon which the said building is at present erected shall not be sold until after the expiration of two years from the date of my death and shall not during such period of two years be occupied or let" (Essie Clay Deceased Estate File, NSW State Government Archives, 20/4273 No 135194).

- Essie Clay's career as a "legitimate" actress appears to have been carried out between circa 1908 and 1914. She received tuition from Harry Leston and Roland Watts-Phillips around 1907-1909, and undertook the principal female roles in two companies which toured Queensland under the management of her father – 1908 Clay's Dramatic Company and the 1909 Walter Bentley Company.

CRONOLOGY IN BRIEF

1898

- Apr. 2: Billed as the "child balladist" Essie makes her first appearance for Harry Rickards at the Tivoli Theatre (Syd). A Sydney Morning Herald review records that she "was not heard to advantage in a song entitled "My Mother was a Lady" as it was evidently unsuited to her register" (4 Apr. 1898, 12).
- Apr. 9: Re-engaged for a second week at the Tivoli. The Sydney Morning Herald review records that "Little Essie Clay" was warmly welcomed and was recalled (11 Apr. 1898, 3).
- Sept-Dec.: Engaged with her parents to tour Queensland with J.L. Travers Continental Vaudeville Company. Among the songs she performed on the tour were: "The Last Farewell," "My Mother Was a Lady," "Our Flag," "There'll Come a Time" and "What Will You Lend on My Dolly."

1900

- Aged 12, Essie was engaged, along with her father and mother, to tour Queensland for Walter Bell's Waxworks, Boer War and London Vaudeville Company. One of the songs she is recorded to have sung was "Place Thy Loving Arms Around Me."

1901

- Toured New South Wales and Queensland, and possibly Tasmania and Victoria, with Harry Clay's Waxworks and Vaudeville Company. Among the songs she sang were: "Please Mr Conductor," "In the Pale Moonlight," "John Bull Jnr," "London Town," "My Mother was a Lady," "Take a Patsie," "She Was Happy Till She Met You," "I'll Be Your Sweetheart, If You'll Be Mine" and "Whisper My Name to Nell."

1902

- Toured New South Wales and Queensland with Clay's Waxworks and Comedy Company. Known songs were: "You Can Get a Sweetheart But Not Another Mother" and "Good-bye Dolly Gray."

1903

- Toured New South Wales and Queensland with Clay's Waxworks and Comedy Company (aged 15).

1904

- Toured New South Wales and Queensland with Clay's Waxworks and Comedy Company. Now aged 16 Essie was being billed as the "young contralto."

1905

- Essie did not tour Queensland this year.

1908

- Cast in the principal female roles, opposite Albert Lucas, for Clay's Dramatic Company tour of Queensland. The Toowoomba Chronicle records that this was Essie's first important appearance on the stage in a dramatic role. Her roles were:

Madge Carlton (*The World Against Her*)
Norah Desmond (*The Irishman*)
Camille (*Camille*)
Mary Anne (*The Marriage of Mary Anne*)

1909

- Engaged for the New South Wales and Queensland tour with Clays Waxworks and Comedy Company. Her repertoire included: "Antonio," "Boomerang," "Cherry Blossom" "Cosy Flat," "I'm Thinking of You," "Just Idle Dreams," "Take Me Back to Bendigo," "When My Golden Hair is Turned Silver-Grey" and "When the Whip-Poor Will Sings, Margaret."
- Aug-Nov.: Tours as lead actress opposite Walter Bentley with Clay's Dramatic Company. Her roles were:

Ophelia (*Hamlet*)
Annette (*The Bells*)
Ada Ingot (*David Garrick*)
Julie (*The Courier of Lyons*)

1911

- May: Appears in The Bad Girl of the Family at the Adelphi Theatre (Syd). Produced by George Marlow, the cast includes Robert Inman, H. W. Diver, Arthur Shirley, J. P. O'Neill, John Cosgrove, Wilton Welch, Frank Reis, Ethel Buckley, Nellie Ferguson and Cora Warner.

1912

- Returned to Queensland with her father's touring vaudeville company. Among the songs she is known to have performed were "Little Man" and "Mandy Lee."

1914

- Performs a various times during the year at the Bridge Theatre (Newtown).

1919

- Contracts the Spanish Flu.

1920

- Recorded as "still ill," and described as Harry's cherished daughter, *Australian Variety* notes that Essie's condition was serious and even though she fell ill some time ago "she has never been the same since." The piece goes on to note "it will be remembered that Miss Clay proved herself one of Australia's most artistic young actresses some years ago" (5 Aug. 1920, 1).

1925

- Residence: 50 Hall Street, Bondi. Records show that she was still living at this address in 1933.

1948

- Essie Clay died on 13 May in Sydney. She is buried in the same plot as her father and mother. Her epitaph reads:

In Ever Loving Memory of Essie
Beloved Daughter of Catherine and Harry Clay
Who Passed From This World 13th May 1948
Thy Will Be Done

- Miss Essie Clay, the child balladist was not heard to advantage in a song entitled "My Mother Was a Lady," as it was evidently unsuited to her register (SMH: 4 Apr. 1898, 12).
- Little Essie Clay, a child balladist, who is said to have just concluded a successful season with the Rickards Company, sang "My Mother Was a Lady," in excellent style, giving evidence of some talent (BC: 26 Sept. 1898, 7).
- Little Essie Clay succeeded in completely pleasing the audience by her singing of "The Last Farewell." A very promising child vocalist, little Miss Clay had no difficulty in impressing the audience favourably (BC: 3 Oct. 1898, 6).
- Little Essie Clay again captivated her hearers with "There'll Come a Time" (BC: 5 Dec. 1898, 6).
- Essie Clay was heartily encored for her sweet rendering of "I'll Be Your Sweetheart, If You'll be Mine," her clever enunciation and nicely balanced voice being a treat to hear (NM: 8 July 1901 2).
- The leading lady is Mr Clay's own daughter, Essie, who has been showing great promise in the roles allotted her, and to whom our Northern contemporaries extend great praise. It is predicted she will soon take her place among the chief of our Australian actresses (TC: 24 Oct. 1908, 3).
- The part of the heroine has been entrusted to Miss Essie Clay, who is making her first important appearance on the stage, and she will be supported by a particularly strong combination of metropolitan artists (TC: 27 Oct. 1908, 3).
- The rising of a new star in the theatrical firmament is ever a matter of interest, and the advent of Miss Essie Clay, daughter of the well-known manager, tomorrow at the Town Hall will be bound to excite more than ordinary curiosity (TC: 29 Oct. 1908, 3).
- Miss Essie Clay's acting was a treat. It was a most difficult role to fulfill, but nevertheless her portrayal was excellent and well above some who come here with a record (TC: 31 Oct. 1908, 3).
- The "star" was of course, Miss Essie Clay, whose representation of an injured wife was decidedly realistic, and it earned for her unmistakable signs of approval. She has a charming presence on the stage, has a sweet-toned voice, and puts considerable feeling into her acting (TC: 29 Oct. 1908, 7).
- Miss Essie Clay's acting was again admirable, while all the remaining members ably acquitted themselves (TC: 4 Nov. 1908, 3).

- Miss Essie Clay's Ophelia was very tender, graceful, pathetic, and picturesque. In the heart-touching mad scene she showed histrionic gifts of a high order, albeit in some of the earlier scenes she was inclined to charge them with too much heaviness. Her musical speaking and singing voice and her pleasing presence all helped to invest her performance with additional interest (BC: 6 Sept. 1909, 6).
- Miss Essie Clay, as Ophelia, deserves considerable praise. She is natural, easy and realistic. Her voice is attractive, young, and as her singing in the mad scene pathetically true. The role is a difficult one and Miss Clay is to be congratulated on her admirable interpretation of the part (NM: 1 Oct. 1909, 5).
- Miss Essie Clay is seen too much advantage. In the heart touching mad scene she gave a fine exhibition of her histrionic gifts, which even the 'pit' m- a thing that rarely comes from such a quarter in such scenes – applauded the actress as heartily as the other parts of the theatre... Her interpretation of Ophelia was worthy of a more experienced actress than Miss Clay (TC: 29 Oct. 1909, 3).
- Essie Clay's rendering of "The Rosary" was excellent, every word being understood, and her voice getting sweeter every week (AV: 22 July 1914, 6).
- Essie Clay gets some good songs this week. She has a winner, "Little Man," which she sings well (AV: 29 July 1914, 6).
- Louise Carbasse says that Essie Clay has the prettiest feet she has ever seen (TT: Sept. 1914, 28).

SONGS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN PERFORMED BY ESSIE CLAY

Dates in brackets indicate the first known performance. All other dates indicate other years the song was known to have been performed.

[IS] = Performed as an illustrated song

"Antonio" (1909) [IS]
 "Boomerang" (1909) [IS]
 "Butterfly and the Daisy, The" (1904)
 "Cherry Blossom" (1904)
 "Christmas Without Daddy" (1904)
 "Cosy Flat" (1909) [IS]
 "Daddy" (1904)
 "Good-bye Dolly Gray" (1902) [IS]
 "Good Mr Mailman" (1904)
 "I'll Be Your Sweetheart, If You'll Be Mine" (1901)
 "I'm Thinking of You" (1909)
 "In the Pale Moonlight" (1901)
 "John Bull Jnr" (1901)
 "Just Idle Dreams" (1909)
 "Kentucky Babe" (1904)
 "Last Farewell, The" (1898)
 "Little Bubbles" (1904)
 "London Town" (1901)
 "My Mother was a Lady" (1898) 1901
 "Our Flag" (1898)
 "Place Thy Loving Arms Around Me" (1900)
 "Please Mr Conductor" (1901)
 "Rosary, The" (1914)
 "She's the Sweetheart From Savannah" (1904)
 "She Was Happy Till She Met You" (1901)
 "Take a Patsie" (1901)
 "Take Me Back to Bendigo" (1909) [IS]
 "There'll Come a Time" (1898)
 "What Will You Lend on My Dolly" (1898)
 "When My Golden Hair is Turned Silver-Grey" (1909)
 "When the Whip-Poor Will Sings, Margaret" (1909)
 "Whisper My Name to Nell" (1902)
 "You Can Get a Sweetheart, But Not Another Mother" (1902)
 "You Say Your Mother Was a Lady" (1904)

AUDIENCE WERE T

HARRY

CLAY RAN

VAUDEVILLE



HARRY Clay, King of Vaudeville stood on the footpath in Castlereagh-st., opposite the old Tivoli Theatre.

Outside the theatre he saw his top comedian, Ted Tutty. Clay rammed a couple of fingers into his mouth and whistled.

Tutty went down on all fours and as the traffic clattered to a halt crawled slowly across the road. He came up to his employer and licked his hand.

Clay patted him on the head.

"You're a good pooch, Teddy," he said "Be on time tonight, or I'll down you." Then he went his way.

Even the policeman on duty at the corner of King and Castlereagh Streets showed no surprise at these antics. Everyone in Sydney knew Harry Clay.

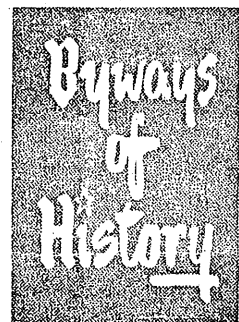
Clay was one of the greatest figures in the history of Australian vaudeville.

No actor was worth his salt unless he had run the gauntlet of Harry Clay's standards and the hypercritical audiences that followed vaudeville.

Clay was an enigma. He neither smoked nor drank. He would not

In his late teens he was earning a few shillings extra, singing with the vaudeville shows on circuit from Sydney.

At the turn of the century, he came to Sydney and devoted his



whole time to the theatre.

He had no trouble in finding work, but he did have trouble with his employers. His strong personality did not take easily to direction.

So Clay got together a few small acts and began Clay's circuit round the Sydney suburbs.

His main theatre was St. George's Hall, King-st., Newtown.

Vaudeville in those days was wild and woolly. It was a cut-throat battle between the promoters for audiences.

Backed by Harold T. Morgan and Archibald R. Abbott, Clay bought out an old blacksmith's shop and built his famous theatre at Newtown Bridge.

Expanded

As business grew so did his holdings. He went into the Princess Theatre near Central Railway, the Gaiety Theatre in Oxford-st., and the Coliseum (now the Independent) at North Sydney.

Clay also ran two country circuits, north in the Newcastle area and south round Wollongong.

EVERY act employed had to do all the theatres and circuits before the contract ended.

The going was tough for performers, particularly at the Newtown and North Sydney theatres.

Should the audience react unfavourably — usually by roaring their disgust until the whole building shook — the actor was given his pay and sent on his way.

◆ **HARRY** Clay and his artists and employees gather outside the Bridge Theatre when his vaudeville empire was in its heyday.

The cast was always prepared for practically anything when the Coliseum showed on Saturday nights.

Brick-carters from Gore Hill turned up in their hundreds in button-up boots, pearl buttons on their coats, slouch hats with the sides turned up and violently colorful scarves round their necks.

From the first act it was on, with the brickies bellowing and shouting their disapproval or delight.

Harry Clay's chief "chucker-out," "Snowy" Sturgeon, an ex-boxer, would go into action.

One loquacious brickie would follow another out the side exit until the more noisy element had been removed and the voices from the stage could be heard.

Fans came miles sometimes just to hear Harry Clay swear.

WITH Clay's ruling the roost at Newtown, the Fuller circuit decided to enter into competition.

Fullers took over the Majestic (now the Elizabethan) and the battle for audiences began.

The night Fullers opened found Clay's almost empty. Harry Clay told Chenoweth to do something about it.

On the Monday a full-page ad. appeared in the Newtown Daily. All it said was: "From Clay you came, to Clay you will return."

The next day, Fullers took over the Newtown Daily. Its ad. read: "No matter how full you are, we're always Fuller."

Tough

Though Clay gave the appearance of being tough with his actors, his quiet kindness often cost him money.

Once an English comedian new to Australia, came to him.

"Mr. Clay," he said, "I'm Clark Time, I'm a comedian."

Clay looked at his credentials and decided on the spot to give him an act at the Bridge the following night.

The comedian was a little wary of Australian audiences. He

warmed himself up with plenty of Dutch courage from a bottle before he went on stage.

Result was he got his lines mixed while his voice came out in great croaks.

Clay called him from the wings: "Mark Time. Are you ready? Quick march!"

As the little Englishman was leaving the theatre, Harry Clay slipped a £5 note into his pocket.

EARLY in 1920, with business booming, Harry Clay took a stroke. He was put to bed in his Peter-sham home.

It was hard, with his tremendous vitality, to stay in bed. He gave his coloured vocabulary full play.

Desperation

In desperation, he got up and went to the theatre. To one of the cast, he said:

"You know, I think it's time I got off this earth."

The man was startled. "Why, Mr. Clay?"

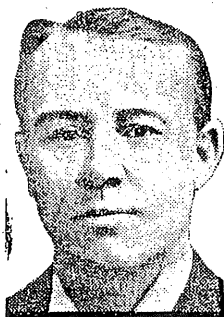
"Because" — and Harry Clay emitted a stream of well-chosen adjectives — "when I walked past the newsboy outside, I heard him say, 'There goes that old so-and-so Harry Clay.'"

"Now I don't mind being called a so-and-so, but I'm damned if I like that 'old' business."

Early in 1924, Clay moved to a small home at Watson's Bay. Artists and fans at the theatres never saw him again.

With just a few friends about him, Harry Clay died.

They buried him at South Head Cemetery, where lie the remains of many others who helped to create Australian theatre.



◆ HARRY CLAY

tolerate a "blue" joke in his theatres.

His own lurid vocabulary, however, would have put any bullock-driver to shame.

There are still optimists who speak of Harry Clay with tears in their eyes.

HARRY Clay was born in mid-1860's in the Newcastle district.

For several years he worked in various labouring jobs. His only asset was a fine tenor voice.

Sometimes his shows were a riot

BYWAYS OF HISTORY

HARRY CLAY, "King of Vaudeville," stood on the footpath in Castlereagh Street, opposite the old Tivoli Theatre. Outside the theatre he saw his top comedian, Ted Tutty. Clay rammed a couple of fingers into his mouth and whistled. Tutty went down on all fours and as the traffic clattered to a halt crawled slowly across the road. He came up to his employer and licked his hand. Clay patted him on the head and said: "You're a good pooch Teddy. Be on time tonight or I'll down you." Then he went his way.

HARRY CLAY was a small actor born in 1860 in the Sydney suburb, Newcastle district. For his main theatre was several years he worked in the St. George's Hall in various laboring jobs. His only asset was a fine tenor voice.

In his late teens he was earning a few shillings extra singing with the vaudeville shows on circuit from Sydney.

At the turn of the century, he came to Sydney and devoted his whole time to the theatre. Clay's pleasing voice always kept the audiences quiet. He was an excellent interlocutor.

Clay had no trouble finding work, but he did have trouble with his employers. His strong personality did not easily to direction.

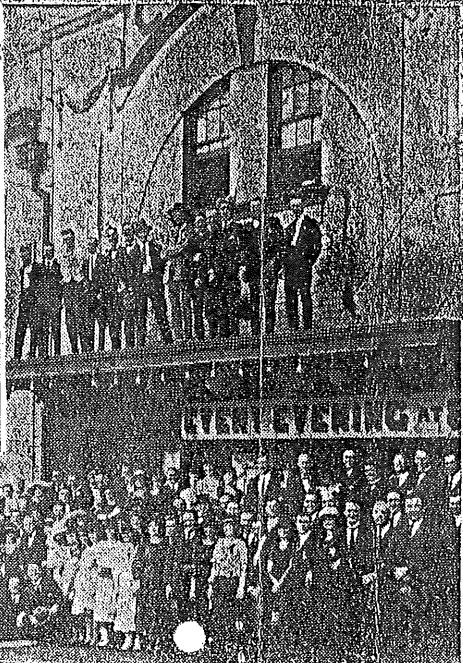
V A U D E V I L L E in those days was wild and woolly. It was a cut-throat battle between the promoters for audiences.

Clay's shows were among the best. He needed to expand and was given financial backing by Harold T. Morgan and Archibald R. Abbott.

Clay bought out an old blacksmith's shop and built his famous theatre on the Newtown bridge. As business grew so did his holdings. He went to the Princess Theatre near Central Railway, the Gaiety Theatre in Oxford Street, and the Coliseum.



HARRY CLAY (left) and some of his artists, employees and other friends outside the Bridge Theatre, Sydney. Bridge layers rioted when he put on his old vaudeville show.



Worried by the Independent, Clay and his company moved to the Newcastle area and South Sydney. Every not employed had to go to the theatre and circuit before the season ended. The going was tough for performers, particularly at the Newtown and North Sydney theatres. If an act passed the standards set by Harry Clay, however, he was odds on he would be accepted by the audience. Should the audience act unfavorably, usually by booing their disgust all the while building up the act was given the go and sent on his way. The act was always prepared for practically anything when the Coliseum showed on Saturday night.

THE brick from Gore Hill turned up in the mud on the bottom of the boat. Clay was a violent colorist and would not let go of the first act it was on with the bricks below and shouting their disapproval or delight. Harry Clay's chuckle out "Snow" Sturgeon, an ex-boxer, would go into action. One loquacious brickie would follow another out the side exit. All the more noisy element had been removed and the voices from the stage could be heard. Harry Clay was a pretty

good "chucker" but himself. He often gave a demonstration of this from the stage of the Bridge theatre. Fans came miles sometimes just to hear Harry Clay swear.

Just before the First World War, Clay's was showing at Bathurst. Harry called a rehearsal for 10 a.m.

When he walked into the hall at 10.30, only person he could see was comedian Will Wyland.

Clay went into a frenzy. Where the devil are all those so-and-so performers? He shouted, spattering the question with a flow of invective that lasted two minutes.

Wyland came to his feet. "Please, Mr. Clay," he protested, "my wife (Lulu Eugene) is behind that curtain dressing."

Clay walked to the curtain. "Are you there, Lulu?" he asked.

"Yes, Mr. Clay."

"Well," he added apologetically, "I'm sorry you heard me, but if you had to work with a mob of Australian —" then followed another stream of adjectives — "you swear too."

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At that minute Boyle walked in swinging his cane. Clay abused him roundly till he ran out of breath.

B O Y L E was crestfallen. "You know Mr. Clay," he said, "I ought to be kicked. A happy smile hit Harry Clay's face. Boyle jumped to his feet and delivered a mighty blow with his boots that Boyle was still rubbing days after.

Some of the best attended shows at the Gaiety and Bridge were the amateur nights on Fridays. Some of the talent was horrible. The audience had full rein to voice their displeasure.

It was bedlam at times. Any performer who passed the ordeal was ready for a run on Clay's circuit. Sixpenny seats were always booked out days ahead.

One of the big tasks was to offer a forthcoming attraction that would ensure a full house at the next show.

Boyle had the job one night. He had heard Miss Annie Jones sing privately and decided to build her up.

Annie Jones was 16— a little thin.

"Thank you" for your attendance," Boyle told the audience. "I want to say that next Friday night you will be given the honor of hearing the greatest soprano voice ever produced in this country."

FOR 10 minutes he kept the audience sitting while he built up Annie Jones' reputation.

After the show some of the audience came back stage. "Is this fair, dinkum," they asked. "My oath, it is."

Next Friday the theatre was packed. They all came to hear the new Australian nightingale.

Miss Jones was the last act. She walked on to the stage. There was a deep silence.

She opened her mouth. From it came a voice so thin the orchestra leader in the pit could hardly hear it.

The audience stayed still for a minute. Then all hell broke loose. The mob raged and roared. Missiles of every description were thrown at the unhappy soprano.

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They included Fred Bluett, George Wallace, George Sorlie, Dinks Patterson, Amy Rochelle, Ted Tutty, Sid Beck and Marshall Crosby.

One man, destined to rank among the greatest of Australian comedians, was summarily fired by Clay's manager.

The comedian went to Harry Clay. "Give me another chance, Mr. Clay," he said. "I'll prove I can make the grade." Clay thought it over.

"No man challenges me that I don't take it up," he replied. "I'll give you another chance."

Years later when the comedian was a top-liner, Clay took him by the hand and said: "I see you kept your promise."

Early in 1924 Clay moved to a small home at Watson's Bay. Artists and fans at the theatres never saw him again.

With just a few friends about him, Harry Clay died.

They buried him at South Head Cemetery where lie the remains of many others who helped to create Australian theatre.

Clay's theatres did not long survive their founder. When the new fangled talkies hit Sydney, legitimate theatre folded up practically overnight.

Clay's crumbled. Some of the houses were converted to picture theatres.

Others were pulled down. In a Sydney hotel which stands on the site of the old Criterion theatre, actors of years gone by still meet regularly every Monday and talk of men like Harry Clay.

Sometimes His Shows Were a Riot

BYWAYS OF HISTORY

Harry Clay, "King of Vaudeville," stood on the footpath in Castlereagh Street, opposite the old Tivoli Theatre. Outside the theatre he saw his top comedian, Ted Tutty. Clay rammed a couple of fingers into his mouth and whistled. Tutty went down on all fours and as the traffic clattered to a halt crawled slowly across the road. He came up to his employer and licked his hand. Clay patted him on the head and said: "You're a good pooch, Teddy. Be on time tonight or I'll down you." Then he went his way.

Harry Clay was born in the mid-1860s in the Newcastle district. For several years he worked in various labouring jobs. His only asset was a fine tenor voice.

In his late teens he was earning a few shillings extra singing with the vaudeville shows on circuit from Sydney.

At the turn of the century he came to Sydney and devoted his whole time to the theatre. Clay's pleasing voice always kept the audiences quiet. He was an excellent interlocutor.

Clay had no trouble finding work, but he did have trouble with his employers. His strong personality did not take easily to direction.

So Harry Clay got together a few small acts and began Clay's Circuit round the Sydney suburbs. His main theatre was the St George's Hall in King Street Newtown.



Vaudeville in those days was wild and woolly. It was a cut-throat battle between the promoters for audiences.

Clay's shows were among the best. He needed to expand and was given financial backing by Harold T. Morgan and Archibald R. Abbott.

Clay brought out an old blacksmith's shop and built his famous theatre on the Newtown Bridge.

As business grew so did his holdings. He went into the Princess Theatre near Central Railway, the Gaiety Theatre in Oxford Street and the Coliseum, now the Independent, at North Sydney.

Clay also ran two country circuits, north in the Newcastle area and south round Wollongong.

Every act employed had to do all the theatres and circuits before the contract ended.

The going was tough for performers, particularly at the Newtown and North Sydney theatres.

If an act passed the standards set by Harry Clay, however, it was odds on he would be accepted by the audience.

Should the audience react unfavourably – usually by roaring their disgust till the whole building shook – the act was given his pay and sent on his way.



The cast was always prepared for practically anything when the Coliseum showed on Saturday nights.

The brick carters from Gore Hill turned up in their hundreds in button-up boots, pearl buttons on their coats, slouch hats with the sides turned up and violently coloured scarves around their necks.

From the first act it was on, with the brickies bellowing and shouting their disapproval or delight. Harry Clay's chief chucker out "Snowy" Sturgeon, an ex-boxer would go into action.

One loquacious brickie would follow another out the side exit till the more noisy element had been removed and the voices from the stage could be heard.

Harry Clay was a good chucker out himself. He often gave a demonstration of this from the stage of the Bridge Theatre.

Fans came miles sometimes just to hear Harry Clay swear.

Just before the First World War, Clay's was showing at Bathurst. Harry called a rehearsal for 10am.

When he walked into the hall at 10.30 the only person he could see was comedian Will Wynand.

Clay went into a frenzy; where the devil are all those so-and-so performers?" he shouted, spluttering the question with a flow of invective that lasted two minutes.

Wynand came to his feet. "Please Mr Clay," he protested, "my wife (Lulu Eugene) is behind that curtain dressing."

Clay walked to the curtain. "Are you there Lulu?"

"Yes, Mr Clay"

"Well," he added apologetically, "I'm sorry you heard me, but if you had to work with a mob of Australian ____" then followed another stream of adjectives – "you'd swear too."

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"My oath it is."

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